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of

American Women Writers

1630–1900

William B. Cairns

Professor of English

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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LETTERS

FROM

THE MOUNTAINS.

VOL. I.

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LETTERS

FROM

THE MOUNTAINS;

BEING THE REAL

CORRESPONDENCE OF A LADY,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1773 AND 1807.

——— "Memory swells
With many a proof of recollected love."

THOMSON.

AN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed by Luke Hansard & Sons,

For LONGMAN, HURST, REES, & ORME, Paternoster-row;
J. HATCHARD, Piccadilly;
and Mrs. COOK, Bury-street, St. James's.

1807.

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TO

MY SURVIVING CORRESPONDENTS.

TO You, my dear Friends, whose affection has been the cordial of my life and whose sympathy has been the solace of my afflictions; to you, whom neither absence, distance, nor the revolution of years have estranged from me; you, whom the influx of prosperity never raised above me, and who never withheld the consideration which mind pays to mind, from the darkest hour of my adversity; To you I inscribe these Letters, which you have kindly permitted me to illuminate with names, which

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accredit the writer, and totally destroy the unjust surmise,—that you are all "like some gay creatures of the element, the creation of an exuberant fancy." To those who could suppose me capable of such an imposition, I only wish that, by being connected by ties as tender, with minds as estimable, they may be convinced of the possibility of your existence.

ANNE GRANT.

Melville Place,
January 27, 1807.

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TO THE FIRST EDITION.

LEST any of my readers should indulge the expectation of meeting, in the ensuing pages, either ingenious fiction or amusing narrative, it is but candid to undeceive them.

The simple and careless Letters here offered to the public, carry in themselves the evidences of originality. They are genuine, but broken and interrupted sketches of a life spent in the most remote obscurity. Of the little interest such sketches might possess, much is lost by the necessity of withholding those parts which contained most of narrative and anecdote.

Why letters should be published at all, comprehending so little to excite interest or gratify curiosity, is a question that naturally suggests itself. It cannot be truly said that the gratification of the reader could form an adequate motive for their publication: and, from the nature of them, it is

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obvious that the unknown author could have no purpose of vanity to answer by it. Yet may not a picture, seldom drawn, peculiar in its shades and scenery, true to nature, and chastely coloured; may not such a picture amuse, for a while, the leisure of the idle and contemplative?—and it is hoped, that the images here offered of untutored sentiment, of the tastes, the feelings, and habits of those, who, in the secret shades of privacy, cultivate the simple duties and kindly affections of domestic life, may not be without utility.

The soul that rises above its condition, and feels undefined and painful aspirations after unattainable elegance and refinement, may here find an inducement to remain in safe obscurity, contented with the love of truth, of nature, and the

"Humanising Muse;"

while those distinguished beings, who are at once the favourites of nature and of fortune, may learn to look with complacency on their fellow-minds in the vale of life, and to know that they too have their enjoyments.

The

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The hope of such a result might, in some degree, console the writer of "Letters from the Mountains," for the painful circumstance that has elicited their publication.

March 18, 1806.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN the Writer of these Letters was impelled to submit them to the public eye, unknown, unpatronized, nameless, without partial review or favourable critic, or any prop visible or invisible, her prospect of succeeding was very faint and dubious. Her only hope, of even partial attention, was founded upon that love of truth, which, for the best moral purposes, is implanted in the human heart; that generous instinct, which lives in the unsophisticated mind, and which feels and acknowledges the language of

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of nature and native feeling, wherever it is heard. Reality, in short, was the prop on which I leant; and it has not deceived me. Minds rich in every intellectual endowment, whose talents give brilliancy to their virtues, and whose virtues give solidity, value, and effect, to their talents; minds, to which even the worthy and the wise have been accustomed to look up to for light, have shed the lustre of their approbation on the simple sketches of narrative and description, the artless effusions of the heart and imagination, which constitute the whole interest of the following selection. It is for such minds as these to distinguish the durable pencil of truth from the water-colours of fiction; and it is not for their satisfaction, but to carry conviction home to a different and inferior class of readers, that the undeniable proofs of a genuine correspondence are about to appear in a second edition. This edition, drawn forth by the generous encouragement of those whom the public voice has ranked among the worthy and the wise, is not, like the former, attended by the severe, the nameless pangs

of

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of anxious diffidence. Yet, in the present case, how oppressive is gratitude, and how painful is self-denial. With what delight, were it permitted me, or could my voice confer distinction, should I enumerate my patrons; but more especially my patronesses. Cheered by their applause, exalted by their esteem, and essentially benefited by their liberality, it would be a proud triumph indeed, were I at liberty to name those virtuous, elegant, and enlightened females, of whom it is not enough to say, that they do honour to England, as they are indeed an ornament to human nature. If one durst draw forth retiring worth from its chosen privacy, I should be tempted to boast, that the same elegant and amiable mind which captivated Cowper in its epistolary effusions (which he declared to excel any others of the kind he had met with), I should boast, I say, that the same mind had exerted its active beneficence, and poured forth its invaluable kindness for me. But it is best to be silent on a subject where one must needs say too little, or be thought to say too much.

To

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To my old, beloved, and long tried friends, I have made a separate acknowledgement. Their personal appearance in my behalf may perhaps have the effect of swelling affected contempt into real envy. Yet 'tis rather hard, that they should be reduced to the necessity so humorously described in the fable, where the critics so often contemned the likeness which the painter had drawn, that he was forced, for the vindication of his art, to desire the original to exhibit his countenance through the canvass;—this too they declared no likeness, till the man spoke out to the utter confusion of criticism.

May 14, 1807.

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LETTERS

FROM

THE MOUNTAINS.

LETTER I.

TO MISS EWING, OF GLASGOW*.

Oban†, April 30, 1773.

I HAD it not in my power to fulfil my promise at Inverary; however, I have taken the first opportunity of troubling you with the recital of my trifling adventures, if such they may be called. After I parted with you, I was too much engrossed by thinking

* Now Mrs. Smith, of Jordan-Hill; the early and faithful Friend of the Author of these Letters.

† Oban is now become a large and flourishing village; it is the capital of Lorn, in Argyleshire.

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of the dear friends I had left at Dumbarton, to make many observations. How good it was in your aunt to treat you and Harriet* with this excursion, which lingered out the painful parting hour so much longer. Alas! it is a bleak prospect for a poor traveller, scarce seventeen, to go she knows not where, to do she knows not what, and live with she knows not whom. But, I carry my affections and my hopes with me. We shall meet again, and that as people do in heaven, with increased love and knowledge.

When I began to recover my spirits, and look about me, I was greatly pleased with the romantically variegated banks of Loch Lomond. Luss, with all its evergreens reflected in the purest of mirrors, enchants me; there is a peaceful gloom about it that reminds me of what I used to feel, when musing be-

* Henrietta Reid was a very amiable and deserving young creature, connected by marriage with Miss Ewing; and by the more endeared intimacy both with her and the Author. This triple cord was never slackened by difference or distance of situation, but continued unbroken till the conclusion of that excellent person's life.

tween

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tween the Fir Park and the Bishop's Castle at the cathedral. I believe one great reason of my preference of you and our dear H. above every body, was, that you seemed to feel and think as I did of that favourite place. I can always get people to laugh with me, and I like to laugh too, at times; but the difficult thing is to get one "soft, modest, melancholy female fair," that will be grave with me, and enter into my serious and solemn reflections, when I have them.

I think, if there was such a thing allowable, or what is the same thing, fashionable, a nunnery (a protestant one, remember) might be very agreeably situated here. What would you think of such a scheme? Do not mistake me; I would not altogether intend this for a place of penance and mortification, but, rather as an asylum from the levity and dissipation of the age; where we might, uninfluenced by fashion, and undisturbed by pride and all the malignant passions that distract the giddy multitude, enjoy the tranquil pleasures of a rural retirement. There, too, we might cultivate friendships;

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which might rest on the basis of reason, not only through time, but through eternity.

I think I see you smile, and hear you compare me to the fox in the fable; while from this solitude I rail at the lost pleasures of the dear town. I arrived here last night at eleven, after a tedious journey, in a very rainy day, through the *Mona Lin*,* or grey mountain, an endless moor, without any road, except a small foot-path, through which our guide conducted the horses with difficulty. The height of the mountain is prodigious. Crossing it, we were enveloped in the very region of storms and clouds. A small dreary lake, or abrupt grey crag, was the only variety which interrupted a scene, enough to fill any susceptible mind with awe and horror. I am now sitting, in the same rainy weather, in a house on the very edge of a sea, sprinkled with numberless islands. But I mean to give you an

* The Mona Lin is a long dreary mountain, without any road but the path of cattle, which one crosses to go the direct road from Inverary to Oban.

account

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account rather of myself than of the country, when the fatigue and depression produced by yesterday's aweful journey are over. I refer you to Harriet for an account of the delight with which I beheld Inverary. I don't know whether I am most dazzled with the duke's house, which has all the antique grandeur of a Gothic castle, without its dismal gloom and petty incumbrances, or with the gaiety and frankness of the people. But my fancy was most of all struck with the great beeches on the lawn, and the beautiful crescent which the smooth sandy shore makes round the bay on which the town stands. I am fallen in love too, deeply, hopelessly, in love, with the old gentleman*; so would you, if you were here; he is so lively, well bred, and intelligent; your commercial beaus would appear clowns, and your military ones coxcombs, compared to him. Pity he is about seventy, and has been thrice married.

* Collector Macvicar, of Oban, distantly related to the Author, whose daughter Mary had the year before resided for some time with her family.

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Mary looks very pretty, is very busy, and very much a housewife; she sends kind wishes to your sister, whom she likes almost as well as I like you.

Farewell, affectionately,

ANNE MAC V.

LETTER II.

TO MISS HARRIET REID, OF GLASGOW.

Inverary, April 28, 1773.

MY dearest H. I have been seriously thinking all the way to Luss, how little we know ourselves, and what odd beings we are. We left Balclutha* so mournful, "thin darkness covered our beauty, and we looked forth from our hill, like half seen stars, through the rainy clouds of night. The sigh of the manly youths awaited our departure, and we went away, very sad indeed." I am sure if St. Mungo's spire were capable of gratitude, it owes me some, for the many sad looks I

* Glasgow.

cast

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cast back at it. I shall ever love my dear native Balclutha, not only for what I enjoyed, but for what I suffered in it. What I have suffered was the common lot of humanity; what I have enjoyed was much more, for who ever had such friends as mine? But now to our recollections. Who would have supposed, when we were at Dumbarton, that ever we should have dried our eyes? Yet when we met in the great room, when the sea-born swains from Greenock joined us, when "the flame rose from the burning oak," we rose to serene, thence to cheerful, and had we not been forced to part so soon, we might have got up to *hilarity*. Then, when the great struggle came, and we did really part, I thought my heart would break; and your last words sounded in my ears like a knell; and I thought I should not smile this whole summer. I read the folded paper James Hall gave me to amuse me when I stept into the carriage, about which you were so curious; it related to real events, and was

"So sad, so tender, and so true."

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'Twas from a young man of merit and parts; who, by a love marriage, had, alas! condemned himself to perpetual poverty. He had gone to scramble among the wealth of England for a subsistence. Why should I tell of his sorrows and disappointments? Finally, my sister, he wrote this letter to a friend (probably James Hall himself) under those impressions which approaching death inspired. That princely knight errant, Francis the First, wrote to his mother from the field of a lost battle: "Madam, all is lost but honour;" good, but this is better still. "The result is, all is lost but a sure confidence in the Divine mercy." And what else can a poor finite creature hold to, when the world and all that is dear and lovely in it, fades from his sight? It was a most affecting letter: "I wept abundant, and I wept aloud." Yet, alas! I fear they were not such generous tears as you might suppose. If I had not been so very sorry myself, I should not have been so easily melted. Well, now I was very sure I would not smile this summer, nor yet read any book but the Bible and the Night

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Night Thoughts*; even the Odyssey was to be rejected. And thus I travelled on, so serious, and so sad. I was got far beyond moralizing; and then came on such small, soft, melancholy rain, and Ben Lomond's great head was wrapt in such a veil of thick clouds, that the nearer we drew, the less we saw of it. And as to my three friends, they shewed as much sense and feeling as Job's did, at first, whose silence, on an occasion which common minds would have seized to say common things, I always admired. In short the whole party seemed lost in meditation, till the sight of Loch Lomond roused us. What a happy faculty is an active imagination to combat the evils of sickly sensibility! I past over all the beautiful groves and corn fields that adorn the lower side, for I had seen such things before, and they brought images of happiness and tranquillity which my mind could not relish in its de-

* The Night Thoughts, and the Odyssey, were favourite studies among these friends, to which they were wont to make many serious and playful allusions.

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pressed state. But the solemn and melancholy grandeur of the lofty dark mountains, and abrupt rocks tufted with heath and juniper, that rose on the other side of the lake, and seemed to close its upper end, arrested my attention at once. I peopled their narrow and gloomy glens with those vindictive clans, that used to make such fatal incursions of old. I thought I saw Bruce and his faithful few ascending them, in his forced flight from Bute. A train of departed heroes seemed to pass on their clouds in long review, and, do but guess who closed the procession; no other than the notorious Rob Roy*, riding up the Loch side with the lady he forced away, and the "twenty men in order," who make such a figure in the ballad. My mother knew the family, and tells the whole history of the transaction. The lady, it would appear, was too delicate a subject for such a rough adventure, for she died of grief very soon after. I saw M. M.'s dwelling,

* Rob Roy Macgregor, the leader of a train of banditti; the last person in Scotland who carried off an heiress forcibly.

beneath

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beneath romantic cliffs, and by a roaring stream, but I was not near enough to trace her stately steps. I made a happy transition from Rob Roy, to think of her, and her good books, and her cheerful piety; such an example to us all. Pray tell her I will never forget her.

All this brought us to Luss, which I am too lazy to describe twice; so must refer you to Bell. But I will tell you how I took a pensive walk to admire Inchmarron*, and the setting sun, while dinner was preparing. There "I chewed the food of sweet and bitter fancy," and felt some of those painful twitches, or spasms (are they not?) in my breast, that remind one how much the soul is superior to the frame that is thus influenced by it. Dinner brought us together, conversation grew insensibly cheerful; our Greenock

* Inchmarron is a beautiful island in Loch Lomond, three miles long, narrow and woody. It serves as a park for deer, and is the more interesting from being chosen sometimes as a retreat for harmless maniacs, who roam at large, and lodge with the Forester.

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friend amused us with amphibious humour, such as all the west coast abounds in; and before tea, your friend, who was not to relax a muscle this year, more than half smiled, and by supper time laughed outright. But truly might I say, that, "in the midst of laughter the heart is sad." Give me credit for my honesty, imitate my sincerity, and tell me when *you* laughed first. In the mean time I will tell you something to laugh at: My "three friends" being engaged in a long discourse, replete with Argyleshire genealogy, I was for a while quite abstracted; my Ossianic mania returned with double force; where every blast seemed to touch a viewless harp; and every passing cloud, brightened with the beams of the moon, appeared to my mind's eye a vehicle for the shades of the lovely and the brave, that live in the songs of other times. How softly sweet, how sadly plaintive, were the strains that now arrested my attention! from the dark caverns of the kitchen they proceeded, and, through the loose disjointed floor of our apartment, they

"Rose like a stream of rich-distill'd perfumes."

This

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This music was both vocal and instrumental; but no such voice, no such instrument, had I ever heard. Could I sit still when curiosity was so powerfully excited? Believe I did not, but, stealing down on tiptoe, beheld a great dark-browed highlander, sitting double over the fire, and playing, "Macgrigor na Ruara," on two trumps* at once, while a nymph, half hidden amongst her heavy locks, was pacing backwards, turning a great wheel, and keeping time with voice and steps to his mournful tones. I retired, not a little disconcerted, and dreamt all night of you and Malvina by turns. Spring appears here but in early infancy. Yet how can I tell you how mildly beautiful the sun arose over the distant hills of Morven; or, with what secret veneration I traced the footsteps of my fathers

* Jews Harps.—"Macgrigor na Ruara," a beautiful plaintive tune, very popular in the Highlands. The mourner, in a pathetic and very peculiar strain of poetry, laments the slaughter of an outlaw, who appears to have been a Grant, and rightful possessor of Glenlyon. A very close translation of this interesting poem is given, by the Author of these letters, in the 4th vol. of Mr. Thomson's Scottish Music.

along

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along their blue gleaming lakes, or through their narrow vales. I saw, in the course of this morning's ride, Glenfalach, in a secret nook at the end of Loch Loney, I think it is called; a name signifying the hidden vale, and hidden it certainly is. One would think it a sad exile to live in one of these recesses; yet, by what I can gather from the conversation of our friends, people somehow contrive to be both gay and busy here.

We drew near Lochaw, and caught a glimpse of Barabreack, familiar to me as the often-described abode of my ancestors. Here we had a long detail of their simple manner of life, their humble virtues, and the affectionate confidence that subsisted between them and their copartners in the same possession. My father delighted to shew us the stream where he first caught a trout, and the little island which had been the object of his first excursion in search of nuts and raspberries: and I listened with delight to tales of other times, told with so much animation; I felt as proud of the genuine worth, and unstained probity of my ancestors,

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ancestors, as if they had been all that the world admires and envies, and only wished that I might not prove unworthy of them. I have already forgotten the name of the place we breakfasted at; but there our fellow-traveller, or attendant rather, forsook us; and there we picked up an original of quite another kind. The carriage was detained while one of the horses was shod, and I took that opportunity of gathering some of the freshest primroses I had ever seen, from the roots of a weeping birch, that actually "wept odorous dews" upon me, as I sheltered under its drooping branches. How do I love these artless bowers, and how much I wish to have you with me here, to tell you things that no other mortal would understand or care for! My walk was stopped by streams, whose descent into the lake was covered by thick shades of alder and hazle, that reminded me of the creek where Ulysses went on shore in Phæacia, and then I wished I had my Odyssey out of the chaise. But, alas! no Odyssey was to be had. Then I was called to breakfast, in an upper room,

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room, the floor of which was much worse than that at Luss; and indeed pervious to every sound. We had taken possession of the only tolerable room, and a newly-arrived traveller was heard growling for his breakfast below. He did not swear, but was so fretful and querulous; so displeased with every thing that was given or said to him, and his manner of growling too was so amusing, he shewed so much ingenuity in discovering faults in every thing, that I burst out a laughing, and said we were certainly haunted by the ghost of Smelfungus, of whom Sterne gives such an amusing account. By the bye, we had just that morning passed, "*with reverence due*," the monument of the original Smelfungus, which rises near his native spot, beside his favourite lake, which he delights to describe in Humphrey Clinker. Tea was prepared, but still thunder muttered hoarse below.

My father, inquiring about the stranger, and, finding he was a gentleman's son of the country, very good-naturedly sent him an invitation to breakfast; for he concluded the

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the house (a very poor one) could not furnish two breakfasts, with their apparatus (of equal elegance) and that this occasioned the ill humour by which we were incommoded. He was a student, travelling home from college; he left all his irritability below, and came up with an air so manly, well-bred, and accommodating, that, had we not received some previous intelligence of his character through the floor, we should have thought highly of him; yet, through the strong lines of a marked and sensible countenance, the scowl of discontent was but too obvious. I, who for my part detest every mode of selfish luxury, could not endure to see a native highlander make his good humour dependant on a good breakfast, and was moreover disgusted by certain learned strictures*

* Among the peculiarities of highland manners, is an avowed contempt for the luxuries of the table. A highland hunter will eat with a keen appetite and sufficient discrimination. But were he to stop in any pursuit, because it was meal time, to growl over a bad dinner, or visibly exult over a good one, the manly dignity of his character would be considered as fallen for ever.

on

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on new-laid eggs, which I am sure made no part of his college acquisitions. Then his appearance was so manly, that this puppyism was doubly provoking. However he sweetened by degrees into an agreeable and intelligent fellow-traveller. But, O! not a single spark of enthusiasm! Ossian himself was never blinder, than he is to the soul-moving beauties of that bard.

Why, after tiring you and myself with such a detail, should I tell you of the horrors of Glencoe, through which we travelled in a dismal rainy day? In one particular, I dare say, I agreed with the stranger, for I really thought dinner the most interesting event of this day's journey, not merely as a repast, but the manner of it was so novel. There was a little inn, thatched, and humbler than any of the former; we came very cold to it; we found a well-swept clay floor, and an enlivening blaze of peats and brushwood, two windows looking out upon the loch we were to cross, and a primitive old couple, whose fresh complexion made you wonder at their silver hairs. All the apparatus of fish-

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ing and hunting were suspended in the roof; I thought myself in Ithaca, though Homer does not speak of peats or trout, and far less of grouse. The people shewed an alacrity in welcoming us, and a concern about our being wet and cold, that could not have been assumed. I never took such a sudden liking to people so far out of my own way. I suppose we are charmed with cheerfulness and sensibility in old people, because we don't expect it; and with unservile courtesy in the lower class, for the same reason. "How populous, how vital is the grave!" says your favourite Young; "how populous, how vital are the glens!" I should be tempted to say here: but after the "stupendous solitude," through which we had just passed, the blazing hearth and kindly host had peculiar attractions.

Shall I tell you of our dinner? Never before did I blot paper with such a detail; but it is instructive to know how cheaply we may be pleased. On a clean table of two fir deals we had as clean a cloth; trout new from the lake, eggs fresh as our student's heart

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heart could wish; *kippered* salmon, fine new-made butter and barley-cakes, which we preferred to the loaf we had brought with us. Smelfungus began to mutter about the cookery of our trouts; I pronounced them very well drest, out of pure spite; for, by this time, I could not endure him, from the pains he took to mortify the good people, and to shew us he had been used to lodge and dine better. I feasted, and was quite entranced, thinking how you would enjoy all that I enjoyed. Dear Harriet, how my heart longs for you, when I think how yours is made to share all my wild pleasures!

The boat was crossing with other passengers over the ferry, which is very wide. We were forced to wait its arrival two hours; to me very short ones; one of them I have given to you, for I could never tell you all this when the warm feeling of the minute had worn off. I have kept my promise, of being minute, most religiously: there is merit in it.

For you I have forsaken Smelfungus, who

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who is yonder walking on the Loch side, in all the surly dignity of displeasure. I am going to tea, and will put him in good humour, with questions about his college. What a pleasant tea-drinking! the old man knew all my father's uncles, and the good woman was so pleased with my interest in her household œconomy! It produced a venison ham, sacred to favourites, and every other good thing she had; every one was pleased, and Smelfungus himself became,

"As mild and patient as the female dove,
When first her golden couplets are disclos'd."

And here I conclude this long letter to begin another at Inverary. Innocent, beloved, and amiable, what more can I wish you, that will not risk a share of your happiness?

Adieu, Beloved!

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LETTER III.

TO MISS REID, GLASGOW.

Inverary, April 29, 1773.

If such a snarler as Smelfungus is so undeservedly happy as to have an Harriet to care for every thing he does, and think his rambling letters interesting, I fancy he is now pouring out to that favoured fair one a doleful complaint of those "vapours, and clouds, and storms," which only exalted me to 'solemn thought." He indeed has a better title to call them "kindred glooms," yet he does not seem very fond of these aërial relations. He and I are a complete contrast; he has nothing of a highlander but by his birth; now that is the precise and only circumstance wanting to make me a complete one. Such a day as we had after crossing the ferry! such torrents! Our carriage stood us in good stead, when we left the boat, in which indeed we got completely

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pletely wet. But, alas! for the unsheltered head of Smelfungus, and for the new hat he was so careful of. Wet and weary, late and dreary, we arrived. And yet I was not depressed. O that I could share with you the musings that absorbed my whole soul this evening. They pertained not to the earth; nor any of its present inhabitants. There are some solemn hours, when the wings of the soul are expanded to pursue the flight of the departed. When, balanced betwixt hope and fear, we hover over the abyss we are forbidden to explore, and anticipate the hour when the "graves shall give up their dead." Did you not tell me to write my thoughts just as they occurred? How else should we converse in absence? how keep the flame that warms my heart alive? Believe me, I carry the same sentiments and recollections with me here, that used to be my companions at the Fir Park, or the Bogton Linn, to which latter present my respects, when you trace my old haunts. The approach to this city of the mountains was so v[illegible]d in mist, that I could only admire,

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mire, through watery moon-beams, the semi-circular sweep which the beach forms round the lake; but I shall be here all day to-morrow, and tell you all that pleases me. I leave to Smelfungus to chronicle complaints; if he felt as acutely as I do, he would have no pleasure in recording his painful feelings, which is to suffer them twice.

Five in the Morning.

What a long sweet oblivion of sorrow and fatigue have I had since nine last night! After discharging superior duties, I am greatly tempted to worship the sun. His first appearance from the sea was so overpowering after his long absence. There he is, "Round as the shield of my fathers;" teaching the mountains to rejoice, and the waves to roll in light. "Whence are thy beams, O Sun?" I am not mad, most *gentle* Harriet, though you may think I do not quite speak the words of truth and soberness. But consider it is the spring of day, of life, and of the year, and indulge me in rejoicing a little, after I have mourned so much and so truly. How

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How could I exist, feeling sorrow so poignantly, if the fair face of nature had not peculiar charms, endless sources of delight for me: Though my sorrows should be multiplied, as very likely they may, I shall have consolations peculiarly my own, that, like Milton's sweet music,

"Will breathe
Above, about, and underneath."

How literal this truth is, the dulcet sounds that stole through the floor at Luss may testify. A little dress, a little Odyssey, a little breakfast, and then—I shall behold the faces of my kindred.—I have seen them; and here they come in succession. - - - Now, I trust, you are tired of characters, and may come willingly down to still life. Last summer you heard half a dozen ample descriptions of Inverary; this summer, it is very likely, you may have as many more; and that from people not so subject to the digressive infirmity as your friend. Depend upon these matter-of-fact people for an account of the princely edifice, and its dependencies;

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pendencies; I shall merely tell you of particulars that struck me most forcibly; premising that this castle, as they call it here, is not finished within. First, then, the Gothic grandeur of the hall, open to the very top, and lighted by a cupola, delighted me; 'tis like a receptacle for the train of a mighty chieftain, and quite in unison with the boldness of the neighbouring scenery. There is a kind of gallery or corridor carried round this hall, from which you enter the upper rooms; the doors of these you see all in one view, as you stand in the hall. 'Tis not like any thing you ever saw before; yet I am sure you would admire it. We were suddenly ushered into a beautiful summer parlour, which had a sashed door that opened into a beautiful lawn. Will you believe me, when I tell you, that I thought, for a moment, I was in the open fields, surrounded by people engaged in rural sports, the scene was so lively, and rushed so suddenly on me. The first thing that awoke me to the knowledge of what I was about, was the different style of the countenances from

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from those I was accustomed to see. What should this be but a room hung with Gobelins' tapestry, whose magical perfection of resemblance made you think the hay-makers and children lived and moved. And for the trees, I am sure your nephew Francis would have tried to climb them. I said, reluctantly, "Adieu, ye woods!" And yet, after all, I am not sure I should like such a room, unless merely to wonder and gaze at. Can it be the love of truth in the mind, that recoils at a very near deception? Wax figures, and very excellent trees in tapestry, make me something like Young's monkies, who, "at a mirror stand amazed;" "they fail to find what they do plainly see." I did not "peep and chatter," but my wonder felt something like disappointment. I was disappointed too in seeing so few pictures. I should like to find portraits in this region of beauty, the lord and lady of which could only have been parallels to each other.

I am told their children excel even the Hamilton family. So they should, having a double claim; their father having been a

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model of manly grace in his day, though now a little jaundiced with stomach complaints. And here I could find in my heart to stop and rail at the world, which, you know, I bear no great good will to. One hears so little about him, he is so quietly passed over to make room for dashers, and boasters, and fighters, and talkers. *He* does not wish to be talked of, 'tis certain; but then I would not have them quite so complaisant as to give him all his will in this particular. Seek for a great man's true and solid praise at his own door, among his tenants and neighbours; and let it be a material part of his praise, that he has neighbours, that is to say, that he lives at home among them. In this particular, the Duke is unrivalled and alone. Every mouth here will tell you of some of these "quiet waters, soft and slow," that steal silently on, carrying bounty, and beneficence, into all the corners of obscurity. Don't be tired, now; for I have a whole volume to write of this good Duke's worth, and wisdom, which improves and

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and blesses the whole country; but I can no more

"Let him still the secret joy partake,
To follow virtue, ev'n for virtue's sake."

Yet, I hope, when this modest and amiable benefactor of mankind sleeps with his fathers*, and when the tenants have ceased to say,

"He is the best of countrymen;"

(a word equivalent to patriot) some powerful voice shall say with effect,

"Rise, Muses, rise, add all your tuneful breath,
Such must not sleep in darkness and in death."

For, as much as I was bent on dying last winter, I may still hear these notes:

"Sweet to the world, and grateful to the skies."

You will say I am quite carried off; but I feel the patriot passion strong myself, and

* That time is arrived; for last year Scotland was deprived of this venerable Duke: who, independent of the rank he adorned, and the power he used for the best purposes, was beloved in life and lamented in death, as a worthy private character, and a genuine patriot.

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am charmed when I find one actually doing all that I dream of doing.—The offices of this fabric are magnificent for their purposes, and the roads leading to them wonders; but what I greatly wonder at is, that they should place the officer at such a distance as to require such roads. I believe there is no danger of my ever living in a great house, and I am not sorry for it. There is such a stately absence of all comfort; every thing that unsophisticated nature delights to cling to, is put so far away; and the owner seems somehow alone in the middle of his works, like Nebuchadnezzar, saying, "Behold now this great Babylon which I have made." I should be very sorry to have my poor houyhnhams where I could neither hear them neigh, nor see them shake their necks, clothed with thunder. Suppose me above looking at hens and ducks, I should not like to have my stately peacocks, and majestic swans, swimming and sweeping a mile off. The gardens, too, must keep their distance. What have poor Flora and Pomona done, to deserve banishment? As for the sheltering Dryads of

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antiquity, they are all marched off, for no reason that I can think of, but their being grown old maids, and the bleak blasts seem invited in their stead. I wonder whether people are to live longer in these temples of Eolus, than they did in the sheltered "halls of other days," where every thing around them was animated and interesting. I wish you could but once see the moon shine on Loch Fyne, and the shadow of Dunigniach falling on the great house. Now, you must observe, the bay forms a perfect crescent, the castle, surmounted by Dunigniach aforesaid, and skirted at great distance by offices, adorns one end of the crescent; on the very edge of the bay stands Inverary, a mean-looking yet chearful and populous place, deriving a peculiar beauty from its situation. 'Tis one street facing the water; and beyond it a fine road, surrounded by a beautiful lawn, sprinkled with prodigious beech-trees, sweeps from one horn of the crescent to the other. I hear, and, being no friend to alterations, am sorry to hear, that this ancient town is to be transported and removed to the other horn of the

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crescent, where the inn and custom-house now stand. This will augment the solitary grandeur of the house, by throwing every thing far from it. The Duke, who does every thing well that he takes in hand, will, no doubt, raise finer buildings; but they will only look like children's card-houses, as the present set appear like molehills. Nature here is so vast and grand, that the works of art diminish to nothing in her awful presence. I dare say, looking from Benleddi, the castle would appear attached to Dunigniach, like Grildrig's box at the girdle of Glumdalclitch.

We spent the evening with the same relations we had seen in the forenoon. Our old friend, the Collector's sister, is a most singular evergreen; indeed she resembles himself a good deal; thin, lively, tall, erect, with a keen expressive eye, and a fresh youthful complexion, though much above seventy. Awake and alive to every thing; always amusing, occasionally facetious, and abounding in anecdote: she has seen many sorrows, and borne them firmly, to say the least.

There

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There were assembled at supper - - - - - - -. I like the kindness and frankness of these friends vastly.

A sister of Dr. M. whom you may remember with us last winter, is newly married to one of these cousins. She has been growing wise for half a century, without cooling in her benevolence in the region of celibacy. She was always a good creature, and a friend to all the friendless; and has now an occupation well suited to such a disposition. I am sure he married her, beautiless and moneyless as she was, that she might be a kind stepmother. And so she is, and seems so pleased with having a family to rear. She puts me very much in mind of a hen with an alien brood of young ducks. If I were to marry at all, which is very unlikely, thinking on many subjects as I do, I could be easily reconciled to a ready-made family, supposing them docile and grateful. I can easily comprehend how one could adopt them to one's affections. Then think of being quit of their plague while they are mere vegetables, and then become mere animals; and

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think of the credit one should get for being kind to these ready-made innocents. And moreover, the strong hold such generosity would give you of your lord's affections. Now if there was any office that would insure one against paying mother Eve's penalty, I think breeding ducks would be no bad speculation. But indeed you may depend upon it we shall never be so happy as we have been. No, never.

The Collector's horses are just arrived; we must leave Inverary to-morrow, and it will rain; and I am so sorry; and I have not half seen it, nor taken leave of poor Smelfungus. I will take leave of you, however; and, if I come alive to Oban, will rise at five every morning to write to you.

Good night, beloved!

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LETTER IV.

TO MISS REID.

Oban, April 30, 1773.

HERE I am, but dreadfully tired; tired of rain; tired of riding; tired of long moors, but, above all, of long descriptions. See my letter to Bell*, where you will find how I came through the Mona Lin. O, never was moor so long and so solitary!

You will say my active imagination might people the brown desert; so it did, but it was with fleeting spectres, and half-seen visions, melting into grey mist. *A propos* to our ducklings; you can't think how my spirit was refreshed by a flock of wild ones, that took flight from a small lake in that same dreary moor. I saw, or thought I saw, two or three deer through the mist, and that did me a great deal of good. Still more, I was supported by a benevolent pro-

* Page 4.

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ject for the reformation of some of our friends; I mean such of them as do, or say, no great harm, but who so bewilder their brains and waste their time among endless mazes of ribbands and lace, and tattle and tales, and "pribbles and prabbles," as honest parson Evans calls them, that, I am convinced, some solitary pilgrimages over the brown desert might wean them from this endless trifling, and teach them first to think, and then, "on reason build resolve," which might be found "a column of true dignity," even in woman. But I will no longer bewilder you among my meditations. The general result, however, was, that we should be oftener alone. I am sure I have little merit to claim from superior reflection or culture. Could I have indulged myself in the society of others of my age, I should, most probably, have done as they did. Had I been educated like other people, I should not have felt the necessity of educating myself.

If, therefore, my thinking and reading have been of any advantage, they are merely the

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the result of certain painful and discouraging privations. If others were secluded like me, or exiled, as I am about to be, from all that was wont to please, they would be forced to seek resources within themselves. This too might be a cure for vanity. I can easily suppose recluses proud, but it is among frivolous society that people grow vain. We are proud of what we certainly possess; but vanity only seeks credit for seeming, and is just as well satisfied to be admired for rouge as for native bloom. It lives in the breath of others, and dies when it is no longer seen.

Don't think I am so new-fangled, as to begin to rail at the town, which I have just quitted, out of fondness for a country which is so new to me, and which, very probably, I may not like. But I am so provoked at the tiresome sameness of treading one insignificant road for ever. Were it a week, a month, a season, that was to be consumed in impertinence and insignificance; but all day long, and every day, and to grow old in it, and die without having lived to any consi-

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derable purpose! People in the country may be abundantly silly and selfish, but the passion for despicable and corrupting novelties is not so constantly fed. When the heart is chastened by adversity, or softened by sorrow, the salutary impression is not too soon effaced. The mind is in a manner forced on the contemplation of nature; and I don't know how any one can see one's Maker in his greatest works, without being the better and the wiser for it. Yet to those who are truly desirous of improvement, the town affords greater choice of society. That, and that alone, I regret in leaving it. I will not be so cruel as to carry you back to the moor, but I will tell you how it terminated. We descended into low grounds, in view of the sea, about twilight, and there was my spirit exhilarated with the sight of Glenfeuchan. The sweet stream that winds by it, the green pastoral vale sheltered by an overhanging mountain, in which it lies, the birch grove, in which the house is embosomed, and, above all, the air of "animated peace," which it derived from the return of the cattle and

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and the servants, at the evening hour; and, moreover, the idea of the warm welcome I should receive from that agreeable romp, Mary Campbell, whom you have seen with me last winter; all this pressed so forcibly on my mind, that I would have given any thing to stop here: but this indulgence was not permitted, so with a heavy heart, I went on, and did not reach Oban till eleven.

Are the cares of a household productive of the same alteration in manner that we have often observed to be the result of matrimony? Mary M——r and I were too unlike to be congenial; but kindred, and those who live together in a perpetual interchange of kindness, may love without assimilating, and even though their views and pursuits should be very different. That was precisely the case with M. and me, when she lived with us. Though she has little taste, no refinement, and not the smallest thirst for knowledge, she is not heartless, has a good understanding, and a quick apprehension of the ludicrous. I am sure, too, she loves me as well as she does any one else, and so she ought;

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ought; indeed she seems to love me still, and is all kindness and attention; yet there is a visible constraint about her. She is often absent, and does not enter into the spirit of raillery, or what she used to call fun. Who could ever think of Mary's being abstracted, and yet abstracted she certainly is. I wonder much how people should be so fond of marrying, when the cares of a household make such an alteration on a girl not sixteen. She manages surprisingly, and pays an attention to every thing, which I am sure I could not do, though I am older, and accounted more sedate. It is very encouraging to her to see how much her father is pleased with every thing she does. And I am so pleased with her father; he is a delightful old man*. If his are the manners of the old Court, I wish I had lived a little earlier. He is not the least formal. Indeed he has lived so much among military people, and has so much of their general

* Collector Macvicar was a polished, intelligent, and public-spirited character, and was a great favourite of the late Duke of Argyle.

knowledge,

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knowledge, and general politeness, that his are rather the manners of an old officer. - - - - - - He delights to talk of his "last friend," who I believe was an amiable woman, and lived happily with him, for the short time their union lasted; though the difference of age amounted to little less than fifty years. I must surely have told you the singular history of that marriage. The only fruit of it, a little girl not three years old, is a creature you could not see without loving. He doats upon her, and I do not wonder at it; every look and motion of the dear little orphan charms one. She is pretty, too, though not remarkably; but she shews sense and feeling that is incredible. The sweet creature follows me already. I never saw a child half so interesting. Good night; I will tell you to-morrow what kind of place this is; this day I have devoted to the people. Besides, it snows so hard, as to remind me of your favourite poem,

"Oft for the prospects sprightly May should yield!
Rain-pouring clouds have darken'd all the air,
And snows untimely whiten'd o'er the field."

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LETTER V.

TO MISS REID.

Oban, May 2, 1773.

THE morning is clear and mild, and something like what May ought to be.

The Collector's dwelling-house forms part of the custom-house; it stands on the verge of this fine bay. The tide flows up to the door, but retires half a mile back, and discovers a scene very new and amusing to me, who have never been at the sea-side, except in embarking and debarking. Vast stones, where the footing is difficult, mixed with gravel, shells, and sea-weed, compose the extensive beach, which the ebbing sea leaves naked. I propose indulging my delight in overcoming difficulties, and exploring odd places and odd things, by many a walk in pursuit of the retreating sea nymphs. For you must know 'tis settled I am to stay till June, when the Collector and Mary are to conduct

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conduct me to Fort William, where my father will meet me. I am glad of it, I shall not be kept so busy, and have more society and amusement. Here is an excellent library, left the Collector by that ill-fated brother who was the patron of my father's orphan childhood. His fine talents, and finer feelings, served only to embitter misfortunes such as could not have happened to a common man. His morals were spotless; and he was not the victim of rashness and imprudence, as is often the case, with these "fine souls too feelingly alive;" nor was poverty among the number of those misfortunes which pursued, and at length overwhelmed him. His fate was very singular indeed; he might have been said to die a martyr to wounded honour. Had he died when the wound was inflicted, his fate would have been comparatively mild; but a man whose form, whose manners, whose mind, were distinguished, above all others, by peculiar elegance, to languish in painful obscurity, branded by a set of miscreants with the disgrace of treachery, which his soul abhorred!

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abhorred! All his patriotic plans for the improvement of the country, all his plans of life, and hopes of happiness, blasted by a malignity too base and secret to be exposed, and too barbarous to be resisted! When forced by the machinations of his arch enemy, Lord J.* to sell his company in the 42d, he tried to amuse himself by rural occupations in his native country; for his mind was too deeply wounded to find solace in those literary pursuits, to which he had been formerly so much attached, and in which, if we may judge by his letters, he was so qualified to excel. A hypochondriac affection, which made life burdensome to him, and often tempted him to throw off the load, made him frequently change his abode, though well aware, that "change of place was only change of pain." Melancholy, solitude, and the corroding remembrance of an irremediable misfortune, soured the most gentle and

* Lord John Murray, who was himself misled by a designing sycophant, and afterwards prejudiced the Duke of Cumberland against this hard fated gentleman.

benignant

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benignant of mortals into absolute misanthropy. I am interrupted, and cannot detail the painful story of his death. It was a sad termination indeed, but not self-urged: such a man could not be so utterly forsaken. He has haunted me ever since I came here. I shall never open a book of his without a pang. What a transition, from the person I have been describing, to those I have just left! You must remember a good natured, giddy, but very genteel looking youth, who was in town last winter, a relation of ours; he is the heir of a very long ancestry, a very small patrimony, with abundance of *original sin* attached to it, and of two of the best old people in the world. Though these good people cared for nothing earthly but each other, and their children, and lived in as primitive and frugal a manner as Baucis and Philemon, they long struggled vainly with their incumbrances. At length they began to get above water, and actually built the shell of a house, to be finished by young hopeful (for a highland mansion is generally the work of two generations). This consummation, so devoutly

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devoutly to be wished, was to take place when the said heir began to thrive in some lucrative profession, or by some wealthy match, to which it was supposed his fine figure and family pretensions might entitle him. He has, in the mean time, a younger but cleverer brother in the army.

But, mark the sequel. A very little, very pretty, and very thoughtless girl, the daughter of a neighbouring gentleman, came home from the boarding-school, as usual, very full of dress, vanity, and music: she was scarce sixteen, quite childish looking, and in frocks. However, cousin and she met, and, in two or three days acquaintance, sung, and played, and romped, and trifled themselves into matrimony. No fortune to compensate this rash act, what should the good old people do?—Just brought them home with all the patience imaginable; and here they are, and often I am told they come; 'tis quite a second home; their own is half a mile off. How I shall be teased! yet conscience says I should like my kindred, and they are most obliging; but I feel something revolting, when people

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people love me dearly at first sight. I can't love others so, my mind shrinks from strangers. Then how should they like me at once? I am sure our old friend must tire of the incursions of these nothing-doing people. I am vexed to see that Mary is fondly intimate with them. Say they are quite harmless, as I dare say they may be, they favour her own bent too much. Good night, I am very tired; but you know my day, from five in the morning till midnight, admits of doing much to make me so.

LETTER VI.

TO MISS REID, GLASGOW.

Oban, May 3, 1773.

I WROTE letters of duty in the morning, walked out all the forenoon, except a short time I spent with the sweetest of children and her father; and now I shall account to you for the remaining hours. After dinner we left our two old gentlemen together, and set

set out for S——: the walk S——ward is charming. It is a sweet place, sheltered by a small hill; a brook, fringed with willows and alder, runs by it; beautiful meadows lie below, and towering mountains rise opposite. I never saw a place of a more pastoral aspect. I love the good old people: there is something so artless, primitive, and benevolent about them. I think I could guess them, by their looks, to be what every one describes them. Do you know, the Highlanders resemble the French, in being poor with a better grace than other people. If they want certain luxuries or conveniences, they do not look embarrassed, or disconcerted, and make you feel awkward by paltry apologies, which you don't know how to answer; they rather dismiss any sentiment of that kind by a kind of playful raillery, for which they seem to have a talent. Our visit, if not a pleasant, was at least a merry one. The moment tea was done, dancing began. Excellent dancers they are, and in music of various kinds they certainly excel. The floor is not yet laid, but that was no impediment

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impediment. People hereabouts when they have good ancestry, education, and manners, are so supported by the consciousness of those advantages, and the credit allowed for them, that they seem not the least disconcerted at the deficiency of the goods of fortune; and I give them great credit for their spirit and contentment, though it should provoke the appellation of poor and proud, which vulgar minds are so ready to apply to them. Is it not a blessed thing that there yet exists a place where poverty is respectable, and deprived of its sting? O this incurable disease of wandering! I will return to my description, which I broke off on the ebb shore. Behind the house, then, is an excellent, though as yet, infant, garden, for this is quite a new establishment; a range of offices stretch along the shore on each side; the king's wherry and other boats, and such vessels as may chance to arrive, lie a little westward, and animate the spot where the joint wisdom of the Duke and the Collector have projected a future village, the rudi-

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ments of which already begin to appear*. From this chosen spot, where a large brook discharges itself into the sea, a peaceful, long, green valley† opens from the shore, of which the Duke has given an advantageous lease to the Collector, who is a great favourite. The cottages lie in clusters on the sides of the sloping hills, or in sequestered nooks, below rocks interspersed with patches of earth, tufted with yellow broom, or mountain ash, which nod so wildly! And the people have so much the air of loving and helping each other! and their goats are such familiar, fanciful looking creatures! I am so fond of the kids, that dance and frisk with so much humour and meaning, and cry so like children, I would fain have one of them follow me tame, and am sadly distressed when I must needs eat them. I think if ever I run wild on the rocks, which at times

* This village is now become a very flourishing one.

† Glenshealeath, or the Vale of Willows, is the name of this verdant and pastoral glen.

I feel

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I feel much inclined to, I will not be a shepherdess, but a goatherdess. These creatures have more sense and spirit than heavy-headed sheep; they differ just as highlanders do from plodding lowlanders.—To return once more. On the other side of the house, and within a small distance of it, rises a hill quite detached from all others, and as like a sugar-loaf, as if the resemblance had been designed by art. It is small, compared to the lofty heights that overlook it. The fine prospect seen from the house, is commanded to great advantage from this little eminence. I climb'd to the very summit, which we should call high, but it is nothing here. There I found a white scallop shell, a diminutive of those used at Fingal's feasts. I was quite glad, thinking it a most orthodox shell, left by the deluge; but was so laughed at—and very justly, when I think of it; for it would, in that case, have mouldered to lime a thousand years ago. Well, I hope this will be a lesson against being positive and conceited. Good night; I go to church to-morrow. Now I think of it, I will not go to sleep

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without finishing what I have so often begun. Of the fine views from this spot, I cannot enumerate the islands I see, nor the groupes of fantastic dark blue mountains, rising in others, too distant for distinction. Just such a prospect, I dare say, Ulysses had from the heights of his dear rocky Ithaca; he looked on Zante and Cephalonia, as I do on Mull and Tiree. Some of these isles are inhabited by one gentleman, his family and a few tenants. What an undisturbed little kingdom, and how happy one could make every subject of it! What an exile, what a prison, would such a sea-girt domain prove to some crowd-dependent people we know!

Mary is, and will be down stairs, getting flattering and comical sea stories, of which she has a great many, that are too much in the style of these inferior regions. Good night again.

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LETTER VII.

TO MISS REID.

Oban, May 5, 1773.

KILMORE, where we heard sermon, is four miles off, at least, being three of highland computation. It is by no means a Jewish sabbath that is kept here; it would be bold even to call it strictly a Christian one; be that as it may, it is a very cheerful one. We set out on horseback in a shower of snow, which people here mind no more than hair-powder. It hinders nothing. We picked up the young couple at S. whose unmeaning mirth made me grave, and set me on pondering. Yet, when I observed the perpetual flow of spirits that buoys up the emptiness of —— I revered the goodness of Providence in making people happy at so small an expence of intellect. I am not sure but their lot would be pre-eminent, were they all as innocent as my good-natured cousin.

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But their imbecility makes them tools to the wicked and designing; so that I believe 'tis as well to have some reflection, after all. This was an odd old church, almost ruinous. But when the preacher came in*, he roused all my attention. I never beheld a countenance so keenly expressive, nor such dark piercing eyes: he is very like his sister, F. M.†, and resembles her in a superior musical genius, being a distinguished composer, as well as performer, on the violin. When I began to look about, the dresses and countenances of the people presented new matter of speculation. This is certainly a fine country to grow old in; I could not spare a look to the young people, so much was I engrossed in contemplating their grandmothers. They preserve the form of dress worn some hundred years ago. Stately, erect, and self-satisfied, without a trace of the languor or coldness of age, they march

* The Rev. Peter Macdonald, Minister of Kilmore, still living; distinguished for musical talents.

† Flora Macdonald.

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up the area, with gaudy coloured plaids fastened about their breasts with a silver broach, like the full moon in size and shape. They have a peculiar lively blue eye, and a fair fresh complexion. Round their heads is tied the very plain kerchief Mrs. Page alludes to, when Falstaff tells her how well she would become a *Venetian tire*; and on each cheek depends a silver lock, which is always cherished and considered, not improperly, as a kind of decoration. These you must observe were the common people; the old *ladies* were habited in the costume of the year one. I was trying to account for the expression in the countenances of these cheerful ancients (many above fourscore) while the pastor with vehement animation was holding forth in the native tongue. Now here is the result: people who are for ever consecrating the memory of the departed, and hold the virtues, nay, the faults of their ancestors, in such blind veneration, see much to love and revere in their parents, that others never think of. They accumulate on these patriarchs all the virtues of their

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progenitors, and think the united splendor reflects a lustre on themselves. The old people, treated with unvaried tenderness and veneration, feel no diminution of their consequence, no chill in their affections. Strangers to neglect, they are also strangers to suspicion. The young readily give to old age that cordial, by which they hope to be supported when their own almond trees begin to blossom. But fine people do not seem ever to think they shall be old. Now in their way, I should love my father not merely as such, but because he was the son of the wise and pious Donald, whose memory the whole parish of Craignick venerates, and the grandson of the gallant Archibald, who was the tallest man in the district, who could throw the *putting* stone farther than any Campbell living, and never held a Christmas without a deer of his own killing, four Fingalian greyhounds at his fireside, and sixteen kinsmen sharing his feast. Shall I not be proud of a father, the son of such fathers, of whose fame he is the living record? Now, what is my case is every other highlander's;

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Highlander's; for we all contrive to be wonderfully happy in our ancestry; and by this means, the sages here get a great deal of reverence and attention, not usually paid to the struldbruggs of other countries. Observe, moreover, that they serve for song books, and circulating libraries, so faithfully do they preserve, and so accurately detail, "the tales of the times of old" and the songs of the bards, that now strike the viewless harp on wandering clouds. All this, with their constant cheerfulness, make them the delight of the *very young*, in the happy period of wonder and simplicity; and finding themselves so, prevents their being peevish, or querulous. Ossian was never more mistaken than when he said, "Age is dark and unlovely;" here it appears "like the setting moon on the western wave," and we bless the brightness of its departure. I was waked out of the pleasing reverie which the sight of so many fine ancients inspired, by the beadles coming to the seat to ask if I had Gaelic, because if I had not, there was to be an English discourse. Judge of my self-

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importance, in having a sermon preached for my very self. Poor souls! will you ever compare yourselves to me again? Meg M.*, when she was composing her meditation upon "Worm Jacob, threshing the Mountains," had not a higher idea of the consequence of her single, sinful, soul. A new, and very amusing scene opened, when service was over: we were ushered into a kind of public house, where it seems all the genteel part of the congregation (and very genteel some of them were) usually meet, converse, and take refreshment, while their horses are preparing, &c. M. Glenfenchan and I met joyfully. I recognized her new blush-coloured lustring, as soon as I went into church, but at such exhibitions I no longer wonder. The *Kirk* here, is literally accounted a public place, and frequented from very different motives. People *not singularly pious*, cross ferries, and ride great distances in bad weather, not solely, I fear,

* Meg Merrison, a conceited bigot in low life, who used to compose and sell what she called her Meditations, one of which had the above title.

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to hear the glad tidings in church, but to meet friends in this good-humoured, kindly way, after sermon, who can tell them all about their eighteenth cousins in India and America. The conversation is in a style so different from what you are used to—

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* * * * * * *

All this is very animated, and I contrive to be much interested. There is little scandal; for scandal is the dregs and sediment of conversation, after better things have been discussed; and we talk so much of the dead, that the living escape. Your belles and beaux would not relish this, for there is no chance of being admired by the dead. I am resolved, for my part, to die in the Highlands, that I may avoid the sudden oblivion which swallows up the departed among polished people, who disguise selfishness under the pretence of not being able to endure to have their fine feelings disturbed with the mention of the dead.

Honest *Donald* feels no such repugnance; but calls up the joy of grief in tender me-

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ditation; cherishes the memory of his fathers, "and walks in the light of their renown."

"Why should I speak of General Chumley,
And Mr. Muster-master Gumley?"
Vide Bathos.

Why should I introduce you to the cynosure of the assembly, the old major, with his tartan coat, his large silver buttons, worn in Montrose's wars by his grandfather, and his redundant silver locks adorning a countenance, the picture of health and benignity? Nor will you care a farthing for his three thin upright sisters, though they are, amidst their oddity, very like mountain gentlewomen; nor for his nine cousins, tasteless thing that you are. Among this singular groupe, were some very well bred, fashionable looking people, who had been abroad in the world, without being spoiled by it, and treated their antiquated rustic relations with a respect and kindness which was both amiable and exemplary. If I were to stay and frequent this church a twelvemonth, hearing

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hearing and retaining as I generally do, I doubt not that I might be qualified to compile the heraldry of Lorn, so skilled should I become in its antiquities.

The sun shone on our social repast, but when we set out, Eolus did not perform the task Thomson assigns him in the opening of spring; instead of "calling off his ruffian blasts," he let them loose in great fury, and the demolition of my new hat awakened my remorse for making so merry with poor Smelfungus's misfortune of the same kind. Blinded with snow, and in instant danger of "mounting the whirlwind's wing," we were accosted by a most respectable looking gentleman, who brought us into his house, which seemed the chosen residence of comfort;—so they told me, for I could look at nothing but the mistress of the mansion, she had been so very handsome, and was still so very engaging: her countenance had so much soul in it, her person and demeanour were so graceful, and her manner so graciously kind. The Collector says, she is all her appearance promises; I felt sorry when I thought

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I thought I might never see her again. After all,

"What's Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?"

My friends laughed and talked louder than the storm, all the way home; I was lost in lofty meditation, and, to own the truth, writing this letter in idea; and then I was so glad to find myself at this fireside, with the sweet little girl in my arms.

I am going to bid good night to the moon; the storm is over, the undulating waters are like living light, while the same beams repose so sweetly on the shadowy sides of far-seen mountains, that arise in distant isles.

"—— in such a night,
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea bank, and wav'd her love
To come again to Carthage."

Ungrateful cur that he was. Adieu! may you never wave a willow, or spend a good day as idly as I have done this. It is past midnight, and remorse is preying on me. Adieu! again, my dearest.

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LETTER VIII.

TO MISS REID.

Oban, May, 1773.

Now, my dear Harriet, I have commenced a bad custom both to you and myself! I write so minutely, that when I settle and have something else to do, I must needs be concise, and then you will think me careless; but you must not, for my manner of writing to you is so like our old wandering chit-chat, that I fly to it as Lizzy does to her snuff-box, and this so often, that I neglect those I ought to like and attend to, and would attend to, if I did not feel as if I had you always in a corner to run to. I will not write these two days, unless a little matter of fact before breakfast, and a gossipping whisper at bed-time. My taste for solitary amusement, and indifference to the volatile chit-chat of some people, begin to excite much observation. Shake off the imputation as we please, every one

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one has their own mode of selfishness, and I feel mine to be that of running away to my solitary pleasures. I repent, will mortify myself, and

"Do penance in gay young company."

Midnight.

I am reformed, and amended, but cannot fatigue myself or you with the description of this day; you will find it in Thomson:

"Deceitful, vain, and void, passes the day."

Why should I speak with peevishness, of good-humoured, harmless people, who show a wish to please me? Why am I not pleased with trifles, when the best of us are doomed to pass great part of our lives in a manner which our own reflections must call trifling? but then I should like to trifle in my own way. I could play half a day with sweet little Anne, or even with a sportive kitten, or puppy: I could gather shells and sea-weed on the shore, or venture my neck for nests, which I would not plunder after finding them; nay, I could talk nonsense as we used to do, and laugh heartily at vagaries of our own con-

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contriving. But their nonsense I can't for my life relish: they think it wit, and I can't accredit it as such. Then they think cunning wisdom, and mistake simplicity for folly. Very rural all this! Here is gossipping for you with a witness. Do not think that I indulge myself in the conceit of not caring for any body, unless they have the taste for reading, which great leisure and solitude, in a manner, forced upon me. But I would have people love truth and nature; I would have them look a little into the great book which their Maker has left open to every body. I would have the rising and setting sun, the blossoming trees and opening flowers, give them the same pleasure, which many taste, without knowing their alphabet. O! when, or where shall I see another Harriet, uncultured and untaught, yet awake to all that is grand or beautiful in nature, all that is excellent or desirable in knowledge—whose intuitive sense of what is delicate and proper, is worth volumes of instruction! The more I know of others, the more I regret you; and the best use I ever

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ever could make of the knowledge which I have accidentally acquired, would be to impress it on the fair tablet of your spotless mind. Good night, my dear; I am neither very well nor very easy. I have got cold in these meadowy traverses. My father and mother go away to-morrow. Were it not for the dear old man, and his little girl, and his library, I would go too. Write to me here, and never mind incorrectness; you will daily improve; or, though you should not,

"Thou hast no faults, or I no faults can spy,
Thou art all beauty, or all blindness I."

LETTER IX.

TO MISS REID.

Fort William, May 12, 1773.

Be astonished, Oh! Harriet, for here I am. Ask why I am here, and I can only tell you it was owing to the strangest caprice. Yet, so it is, and you know I do not use to be

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be fickle. The day after I wrote to you, it was settled that my father and mother were to proceed in the king's wherry, "Mark that, Mary Jones." Two o'clock was the hour fixed. Mary proposed a forenoon walk, I went reluctantly, on condition of not passing the boundary rivulet on the way to S. There she lingered with teasing perseverance; hoping, no doubt, that some of our friends would appear. At length I would go, fearing my parents might go without seeing me. The first object that met my eyes, crossing the hill, was his majesty's wherry, going full sail up the Bay. I grew cold as lead; I felt the oddest sensation; surprise and remorse for being away, and a strange forlorn feeling I cannot express, stupified me for a few moments, and then my eyes filled and I was relieved. Yet I felt as if I were alone in the world, and cared for nothing. After dinner there came a sudden violent blast, with drift and squalls. The Collector retired to write, and I to the library.

Just as we all met at tea, lamenting the sad

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sad evening, there came an outcry from below, that the wherry was seen returning. I was so agitated—in short, the storm had driven them back, and I was seized with the strongest desire to go with them; I knew I should miss many pleasures I had promised myself, that, for instance, of seeing Kitty Macalman, whom I like better than any one ever I knew from this quarter; 'twas odds if I should get away till the end of summer; I had lost all influence over Mary's mind, and I saw clearly she was in hands I could not take her out of: so far from profiting by advice, I knew she would hate me for advising her: she might sink into vulgarity or folly, but why should I grieve myself with seeing what I could not mend? I knew the Collector would be sorry to part with me. I hope it was not cunning, but delicacy, that made me beg my mother to say that she had changed her mind, and would not leave me. How my heart pined for the sweet little girl! I should have delighted to take her with me, and make a little sister of her.

We

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We came off at five next morning, for then the tide made. Poor Mary was not so indifferent as I thought. After we had parted, while the boat was putting off, she sprung, as from a sudden impulse, on a great stone, and from thence to the boat again; she silently embraced me, with a tear on her cheek. If we never meet again I shall remember this as ominous, for Mary is unused to the melting mood. I thought she never looked so pretty: what a fine face her's would be with suitable expression!

The morning was clear, though cold; I enjoyed very much the views on each side, betwixt Mull and the coast, and saw the old castles of Dunolly and Dunstaffnage on rocks projecting into the sea, and many other places of old renown. Do you know, the Collector, who knows but every thing, says, Robert Bruce held a parliament in Dunstaffnage, where all the barons spoke Gaelic. We came past the pleasant and fertile island of Lesmore, a name signifying a large garden, and on the other side saw the coast of Appin, rich in early verdure, and

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and sheltered with groves of oak. The scenery is various and beautiful. This estate is at present possessed by a gentleman of taste and liberality*, who has improved it exceedingly, and, though not a native, seems very much attached to the place. He has built a stately mansion on it, and, being an enthusiast in regard to antiquities, and a lover of nature, is regarded by the people with as fond an attachment as any of their native chiefs. He is indeed, they say, very good and kind to them. I never saw a place that had more attractions for me; 'tis wild without being savage; woody, but not gloomy; and fertile, but not flat. I wish I were to go no further; I should like to tend a flock of goats among those picturesque crags that form the back-ground of that fine picture. A contrary wind gave me leisure to survey these beauties, but cold rain and driving blasts coming on, his majesty's own wherry was in danger of being overset, like a common boat; and his majesty's own officer began to be afraid, like

* Henry Seaton, Esq. since dead.

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any other man. I feared nothing but cold and wet, yet was very glad when I heard a proposal of hauling in to shore, which we did opposite to Appin, at the foot of a steep green hill, on the side of which was a dwelling newly erected, not sumptuous, but, by its neat outside and sashed windows, distinguished from those of the common people. We climbed the hill, and were received with a kind of stately civility by a tall, thin, erect person, a widow,—pale, wan, and woe-begone. She never asked who we were, till a good fire and most comfortable tea-drinking, with many other good things, put us in humour to make replies. She asked my mother if we were connected with the country. Now we had just left my father's country, and entered my mother's. She told the good lady her whole genealogy, by no means omitting the Innernaheyle family, on which the old lady rose with great solemnity, crying, "All the water in the sea cannot wash your blood from mine." This tender embrace was succeeded by a long dissertation on the Innernaheyle family, &c. There

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There is an adventure for you, which will form a suitable conclusion to this important epistle. Adieu! for the present.

LETTER X.

TO MISS REID, GLASGOW.

Fort William, May 14, 1773.

THE hospitable matron who received us so kindly, is, alas! a childless widow, yet not poor, as poverty is understood here; and I really think the standard is better fixed than with you. Is it not due to Providence, to say one is easy, having every necessary and some comforts? I should like elegance dearly, if she were not so nearly allied to luxury — and luxury too I could tolerate, if she were not so abominably selfish. I can never believe that a being, whose wants are endless and numberless, can spare even a thought to the wants of others. Very luxurious people do

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some charitable things, but they are induced to do them by vanity, example, or solicitation. You always hear of heroism and great exertions of all kinds in poor countries. Patience and fortitude, the virtues our helpless state most needs, are the growth of barren soils. I always delighted in Gray's Ode to Adversity; read it once again, and compare its ennobling tenor with my ideas. It is happy I think so: if wealth was every thing to me, as it is to many you know, it would make me miserable to see so many deserving creatures what you would call very poor; but they do not think themselves so, and therefore they are not so.—I know nothing so silly as the disgust and wonder your cockney Misses shew at any custom or dress they are not used to. I now think plaids and faltans (fillets) just as becoming as I once did the furs and wampum of the Mohawks, whom I always remember with kindness.

As this long digression cannot much please, I hope it will greatly improve you. We landed on the west side, and to save

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sailing round a long point, resolved to walk to Ballachuelish* by the light of the moon: it was a bleak evening, and the wind whistled dolefully while we were passing, in utter darkness, through a small wood; the moon broke through a cloud, and the owl began to hoot most opportunely. I started, and was shewn the cairn (or *rude monument* of loose stones) where Campbell of Glenure had been murdered, and where every passenger throws a stone. I can't convey to you the impression, which this assemblage of gloomy images made at once on my mind, aided by the recollection that a worthy and innocent gentleman, related to my mother, suffered death in consequence: though it appeared afterwards, the murder was committed by a soldier in the French service, who lurked in the country since the year 1745, for that purpose. The eulogium and history of this victim of prejudice, kept our attention engaged till we reached

* An estate on the northern border of Argyleshire; possessd by a relation of the Author.

Bal-

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Ballachuelish. The lady was not at home; I was sorry for it. She is a person of more than common understanding and virtue, whom I greatly esteem. She has built a fruit wall, a thing before unheard of here, and does much good among the common people, with the productions of her garden, where she has medical herbs, which she shews much skill and humanity in applying to their proper uses. I have changed my mind about herding goats, and now the result of my moonlight meditation in the wood, and my reflections on this good lady's well-earned praise, have determined me to seek forthwith,

> "A hairy gown and narrow cell,
> Where I may sit and nightly spell,
> Of every star that heaven doth shew,
> And every herb that sips the dew."

What fine transitions one might make, from the bright eye of the celestial bull, to the soft eye of the terrestrial daisy, by thus studying stars and herbs together. A pair of hermits, were that possible, would be a

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double felicity; but, perhaps, I may see something to morrow, at my grandfather's, which may suggest a new mode of life to me. But, whether nun, goat-herd, herbalist, or star-gazer, depend on my being unalterably yours.

LETTER XI.

TO MISS REID.

Fort William, May 17, 1773.

I DARE say I am the more prejudiced against this place, because I was brought here so soon against my inclination. The young ladies of Glencoe, with whom I have a remote connection, and who were at the dancing-school with me the first winter I was in Scotland, (and great companions for the time we were,) sent urgent invitations, and were within two hours ride. I should have liked very much to see them; the youngest is a fine creature,—all heart and soul, without a thought to hide. Glencoe she has often described to me as very singular

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gular in its appearance and situation;—a glen so narrow, so warm, so fertile, so overhung by mountains, which seem to meet above you,—with sides so shrubby and woody!—the haunt of roes, and numberless small birds. They told me it was unequalled for the chorus of "wood notes wild," that resounded from every side. The sea is so near that its roar is heard, and its productions abound. It was always accounted (for its narrow bounds) a place of great plenty and security. In this romantic retreat, where a blue stream bends its course, with a half circular sweep, through the most peaceful and secluded of narrow vales, the matchless melody of the sweet voice of Cona first awaked the joy of grief. On that account you may well believe the glen is peopled with images, that are "pleasant, yet mournful to the soul." Why did I not go there to meet the fair spirit of Malvina in the haunt of roes? Happy daughter of Toscar! to have thy spotless faith, thy virtuous sorrows, and thy soul-inspired beauties, immortalized in the sublime and tender strains

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of thy heroic friend! Thrice happy to have the heavenly employment of pouring the balm of sympathy into wounds of the heart, that could not be closed; of supporting the feeble steps of age and blindness; of soothing, with the melting music of thy voice, and the soft sound of thy plaintive harp, the sorrows of the venerable bard, and of hearing him awake those divine strains, that consecrate to future ages, the fame of thy generous hero, and all thy mild graces and gentle virtues!

Daughter of Toscar! dear and frequent to my nightly visions, come, like a moon-beam, to the chamber of my repose! I wish, with all my heart, that I could design and paint like Angelica. Then would I give "a combination and a form indeed," to the beautiful image that exists in my mind, of the fair mourner of Lutha. The sweet sadness of her eyes you should only imagine; I would not have them profaned by vulgar gaze; she should sit on the ground beside the prince of bards, her white arm thrown carelessly over her silent

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harp; she should look pensively down, as fixed in tender recollection. Her thick locks, blown aside from her fair forehead, as by the autumnal gale, should by chance, as it were, display the pensive grace, marking those fine formed brows from which she took her name; her beauty should appear fast fading like the many-coloured foliage on the back ground, and mild composure should denote a soul that feels a sad enjoyment in its sufferings, and would not purchase ease at the price of oblivion. Humbler pursuits and duties are wisely assigned to me. In conformity to that designation, which was certainly meant for my happiness, I shall come down to the safer walks of common life, and tell you the sad story that has made this glen frequent in the songs of modern bards, and has even found its way to the page of history, to blot it with crimes unequalled in our age and country.

But, first, that you may estimate duly the renown of this little glen, I must tell you what a tuneful and warlike tribe inhabited it. The tribe of Macdonalds, called Mac

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Jans*, or sons of John, who dwelt in this sequestered spot, were all, as the country people say, born poets; and this belief was so well established, that, if a Mac Jan could not rhyme, his legitimacy was called in question: whatever his other merits might be, he was no genuine Mac Jan. This is not only very strange, but very true; but I think we may credit it, on the principle of the old bye-word, "Bode a gown of gowd and ye'll aye get the sleeve of it."† The first possessors of this peaceful retreat, were led to take a powerful interest in the songs of Selma, by the proud consciousness of dwelling in the spot made sacred by the birth of the tuneful hero. The profound seclusion in which they lived, encouraged meditation; the noble objects which surrounded them, and shut out the world, sublimed it. The plenty their retreat afforded to their hunting and fishing pursuits afforded leisure for the

* The name should be printed thus: Macian.

† A proverb, indicating, that a strong confidence of success will, at least, procure a degree of the object aspired to.

Muse.

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Muse. Poetry was universally familiar, where every eminent character rejoiced and mourned in measured strains. All the most obvious images, phrases, and rhymes grew so common, that nothing could be easier than stringing rhymes together like those you have seen me get from —— and ——, who, I doubt not, thought it incumbent on them to be poetical, as well as the Mac Jans. Rosalind says, in As you like it, "I could rhyme you so for a year together;—dinners, and suppers, and sleeping-times excepted." Whether it was by those mechanic means, or by superior powers of imagination, it appears this tuneful tribe claimed all the respect due to superior talents; to which was added, that paid to distinguished courage. When they were induced by the fatal feuds, so common in old times, to attack any other tribe, it was not easy to pursue them into their retreats; and then they sallied forth again with the hardiness produced by impunity. Thus they became fearless themselves, and feared by others. To be concise, they were always

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with the Stuarts, their neighbour clan, and against their opponents, which, in the end, provoked no common vengeance. In the year 1694, or later, it was required, that all heads of tribes, in that district, should take the oaths to Government at Inverary. Now this was a hard pill; for the highlanders could never forgive King William for dethroning his uncle. 'Twas quite out of their style of doing injuries; and the reasons for so doing were beyond their comprehension. Probably Mac Jan was not in the least sorry that a violent storm made the mountains impassable about the last days of grace; so he made a declaration before some magistrate at Fort William, that he would have gone to take the oaths, if he could. This informality was seized on as a pretext, by some enemy whom he had in the army, whose ancestors had probably suffered from the fury of a Glencoe irruption. A company marched out, from the Fort, under pretence of quartering in the glen, till the oaths were taken. They were received with the most hospitable kindness; the officers

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officers were lodged in Glenco's house; the soldiers with his tenants. This happened in the joyous days of Christmas, when it is, if ever, that these people have plenty and good cheer. Glenco was not well, but sat up and played at cards the last night, out of courtesy to the officers. At midnight the soldiers got the word of command; every man went in and shot his host, and then bayonetted the boys and old people. It was a clear frosty night. The discharges of shot through the echoing glen alarmed those who had given up their beds to their guests, and slept in bye places. Of these I cannot exactly recollect how many escaped to the mountain, to suffer every extremity of cold, hunger, grief, and fear. I have not nerves for the whole detail; suffice it, that Glenco's last breath was spent in a devout aspiration; that his superannuated father was murdered in his bed, by an ensign, whose name should never be pronounced, or written; and that his eldest son, in his eighth year, was stabbed by the same ruffian, when on his knees, imploring mercy.

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The present Laird, grandfather to my young friends, was an infant two years old, and was carried off to the hills, by his nurse, unobserved. The only other male in the chief's house who escaped was the bard; I am sure he did not, like Phemius, cry out, "O spare the poet's ever gentle mind;" nor, by any means, owe his safety to his tuneful powers; but, as every shift had been made to accommodate the strangers, he slept in some odd corner. Next day there was neither smoke seen, nor voice heard in this close-peopled glen, which before contained about three hundred inhabitants. The bard sat alone upon a rock, and, looking down, composed a long dismal song, which I would give all my ear-rings to understand. They say it has not much poetical merit. No wonder—"Small heart had he to sing." Now you are waiting to hear, with a savage delight, of the punishments inflicted on those midnight assassins, and the exemplary vengeance that pursued their cruel chief. No such matter; the cry of blood resounded over all Europe, and the hero of Nassau heard

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heard it, as if he heard it not. This was a great blot in his character; but, no doubt, he had been made to believe, that Glenco was some sanguinary monster, who lived by rapine. Princes adjust their accounts of this kind very easily; it is but calling people savages, and then their blood is of no value, and their lives of no consequence.

Why should a musical, poetical, and patriarchal highland chief fare better than the Incas of Peru, "where dwelt the gentlest children of the Sun."

William was a hero after all. But authority, pure at the source, is often poisoned in the channels. Yet, though he could not remedy the evil, he ought to have avenged it. Now you would know how the chief agent in this villany ended. He died at a ripe age, abundantly prosperous. But who saw his nightly visions, or felt his secret pangs? The Judge of all the earth never fails to do right, though we cannot always see how.

Satiate with blood, I bid you good night. It is very possible, I am going to occupy the

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the same room the *Ensign* slept in, when he returned from the depopulated glen; he will, may be, come and smile on me, like the blood-smeared Banquo.

"From fairies, and the tempters of the night,
Guard me, good angels."

I am awake, and have not seen the ensign. Let his memory perish, as well as that of all the wretches who perverted mercy, and abused authority in this place. Of the many shocking details I have been pained with, I shall only recite one. There was an English major, who, in the absence of the governor, commanded the garrison in the dismal year 1746. There was, at that time, after much previous *severity*, a free pardon offered to all the lower class, who would deliver up their arms; those found with weapons in their possession had no mercy to expect.

After supper, when the commandant and his officers were enjoying their bowl in this house, the serjeant of the guard came in, and said, there were three men brought in with their arms,—What should be done with

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with them? "What but hang them!" said the major, impatient of disturbance. Now this was owing to the serjeant's inaccuracy of expression. The poor men, in fact, were coming in with their arms, to deliver them up, and, meeting one of the out-parties by the way, accompanied them to the garrison. "When the giant awoke from his wine," it was the first thing he did to look out at the window; and the first object he saw, was the bodies of these unhappy men, hung over a mill opposite. He was filled with horror, not recollecting his last night's order. When it was explained to him that the poor creatures came to receive the proffered mercy, the intelligence threw him into a deep and lasting melancholy. My father, though of all whigs the bluest, speaks with horror of this transaction, and says he saw a very pretty young widow come to that mill the following winter, whose father, brother, and husband, had been the sufferers.—O! when shall I have spirits to relish the kindness I receive from very worthy people here, and give you some idea of Inverlochy? Dismal, dismal,

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dismal, it appeared to me; drenched with cold rains, and covered with clouds of unusual darkness. The shore so flat and unmeaning! A long low moor spreading behind; very little verdure in sight; no peaceful vales or sweet streams; the very river Nevis to me looks gloomy and stupid; 'tis a little Acheron. Ben Nevis is a great clumsy mountain, without any fanciful breaks, or fine marked outline, like those of Morven. It is great, without sublimity, and seems to nod above this ugly town, and shake a perpetual drizzle from its misty locks. As far as a mountain can resemble a man, it resembles the person Smollet has marked out by the name of Captain Gawky. I wonder much how any one lives here, who could live any where else.

Yet, I am told, Glenevis has rural beauties, and is very sweet and placid, when once you get into it, which I have no desire to do. The village, which stretches from the Fort, along the banks of the Lochy, is a very tolerable one, could I but think so; but this Fort, "with many a foul and mid-day

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mid-day murder fed," looks just like a place to kill people in, 'tis so gloomy and uncouth: it is triangular; the soldiers' barracks are of wood, grown black with the constant rains. We are in the best of the officers' apartments, occupied by a very worthy family, the master of which holds the same half-military employment here, which my father is to exercise at Fort Augustus. I was not in the humour for liking these people if I could help it, but I find I must. They grow upon me every moment. Mr. Gray* is a native of the border; quite an original: harsh-looking at first, yet, when the smile of benevolence lights up his countenance, and his humour, anecdote, and observation begin to unfold, you would not think him the same person. Mrs. Gray is just recovering from illness; mild and beautiful I am sure she has been; and they have a little boy, more lovely than the

* Mr. Gray was Barrack-master, Post-master, &c. at Fort William; had large farms, trading vessels, &c. and was in easy circumstances and much respected.

Cupids

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Cupids in the college; if he could but speak, he would almost rival Anne the well-beloved. I say so much of people so new to me, because they are the only objects here I can regard with any complacency. If Fort Augustus be such a place, I will certainly become a votary of the

> " Pensive nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, stedfast, and demure,"

whom we used to admire so much. Expect to see me when we meet,

> " With sable stole of cypress lawn,
> O'er my decent shoulders drawn."

—I have no spite against this place, but I am provoked at its superabundant negatives. It is a sea-port, without being animated; it is a village, without the air of peace and simplicity; it is military, without being either gay, or bold looking; it is country, without being rural; it is highland, without being picturesque or romantic; it has plains without verdure, hills without woods, mountains without majesty, and

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and a sky without a sun; at least his beams appear so seldom, that I wonder the Lochabrians are not dazzled into idolatry, when he walks in his brightness.—O, this is a bad country for a butterfly, a bee, or an enthusiast, to expatiate in; but it is the best place in the world to remember an absent friend in! "Thought strays a wretched rover o'er the pleasing past;" I feel the spark of fancy kindling at the torch of memory; but, as Gray says of Jove's eagle, "the thunder of whose beak, and lightning of whose eye were to be quenched," &c. &c. I too will quench my mental light in "dark clouds of slumber." Meet me in my dreams, daughter of winding Clutha! Adieu!

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LETTER XII.

TO MISS REID.

Fort William, May 20, 1773.

MY DEAR H.,

I DARE say you are ready to cry out, "Lochaber no more!" and I am sure I am ready to echo the same note. Yet who ever left a happy family without regret? and I am about to leave a very happy one. Our host improves upon us every hour. He has good sense, and a good heart; and is a perfect cabinet of that sort of old-fashioned knowledge that I like. He is from near the Law of Berwick, and knows all the traditionary history of the Border; of the Humes and the Elliots. He is, in fact, a true blood old Scotsman; shrewd, cautious, and sarcastic, yet kind and affectionate where he loves.

Do you know if ever I break a resolution you *wot of*, it shall be in favour of an ugly man.

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man. Ugly is a harsh word, I only mean plain looking, rather harsh, like Mr. Gray: he should be much older than myself too. These are the people likely to be most grateful for attention, from a person whose youth, &c. &c. might make it presumed, that she had made some sacrifices. I do not suppose myself capable of having any thing to do with folly or knavery; but, put these out of the question, and if I had a choice of fifty, it would not be the wisest, the wittiest, the wealthiest, nor, by any means, the handsomest, that I should choose. No; it would be the person capable of most affection, if one had scales that would weigh such a thing. But, wanting these, he who, having the least opinion of his dear self, is likeliest to value another; he, who, having outlived early vanity and romance, can best value "the sober certainty of waking bliss," such as this good couple most deservedly enjoy. She is amiable, gentle, and well-bred; a person of family too. He looks with such calm complacency at her, and is so charmed with every thing she says! The

respect

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respect she shews him, is so softened by affection! She has a sister here*, not the least like her, but an excellent creature; good-hearted, frank-spirited, and active. They all form such an harmonious groupe, and the little boy is so lovely! There is one in the cradle too; but I only mind those that can "softly speak, and sweetly smile;" for the boy of boys has some pretty half-formed words. My father went on a week ago to Fort Augustus, to regulate matters for our removal; but his predecessor's family are ill of fevers. We have been urged to stay here till matters are in a train, but have resolved to proceed. I am sure I shall feel much concern when I go away. There is a Major C—ne here, a man of taste and ingenuity, who pleases me much by the delight he takes in talking of his wife, who is certainly very pretty. He has her picture, drawn by himself, with a most angelic expression. Happy artist! who can thus give a visible and lovely form to the predominant image in his mind. If I could but sing and

* Miss Graham, still living.

draw

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draw true likenesses of my friends, I think I should not be an unhappy exile, after all.—I will not write another word from hence. I am busy with a piece of work, which I mean as a memorial for sweet Mrs. Gray; and won't bestow a minute on you, till I see myself in Loch Ness. Good night, my dearest! Write, or not write, my spirit is with you; and I feel a pleasure in thinking I can contribute to your amusement.

Once more adieu! *when I meet with another* that possesses your native delicacy, your disinterestedness, your purity of heart, I will forget you: forget all our past happiness, and those that shared it. Peace be with you, my own Harriet.

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LETTER XIII.

TO MISS REID.

Fort Augustus, May 24, 1773.

MY DEAREST HARRIET,

I AM very much disordered by my journey; but, while I am able, I shall endeavour to describe it, for Bell as well as for you, and it is needless to tell you both the same thing.

On Monday we set out on horseback, good Mr. Gray conducting us to Highbridge; and a most instructive and entertaining companion he was. Why did I leave Lochaber without introducing you to the castle of Inverlochy? You never saw such a castle in your life. I mused the whole night after I saw it, on the strange manner in which the inhabitants must have lived. It is large and square, and has the remains of four round towers. It is built of round stones, that never were touched by the ham-

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mer. You may guess its venerable antiquity, from the circumstance of Achaius, "our gude Scots king," having signed a league with Charlemagne here, in the eighth century.

Only think how kings could choose such a residence; but they were great hunters, and the dark moors in view were all a forest then. The sea running up so far into the bosom of the mountains, was also a favourable circumstance: besides, it stands in the mouth of the singular and important Glenmore, which I shall hereafter describe to you. It is somewhat singular that sixteen thanes, or chiefs, of the name of Cumming, witnessed this league.

The progress and declension of power is worth tracing; it makes no unimportant part of the history of human nature. In these days the Cummings were unrivalled in the north, and potent every where. The wisdom and valour of some distinguished individuals, no doubt, procured this influence at first. When they acquired it, they abused their power; by their joint influence, bore down

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every other name, till, in the end, they became the objects of universal fear and jealousy.

There were doubtless, among so great a number, unworthy individuals, whom the spirit of clanship led the more deserving to protect and support, in some instances of violence or fraud. This created a kind of combination against them; and the treachery of the *Red Cumming*, which provoked Robert the Bruce to stab him in the cloister of the Gray-friars at Dumfries, was a mortal stroke to their declining power.

What an astonishing instance it was of our great Robert's royalty of mind, that, when hunted from place to place, pursuing a precarious title to a despoiled crown, he could, in the glow of virtuous indignation, perform such a deed in such a place, without losing all popularity! It was the blindness of zeal. The cruelty of the times, attended with bitter exasperations, prevent its being a stain on our liberal minded hero. Don't think I am diverted from my favourite star in the galaxy of fame; I always see the spirit

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spirit of Wallace superior and alone, like Hercules, reposing after his labours. Do not tell me of his being bloody; no doubt he thought it was the "sword of the Lord, and of Gideon, that he drew:" "Nothing he did in hate, but all in honour." I reverence his hallowed shade, as much at this present moment, as when we were trying to lift his two-handed sword in Dumbarton Castle*.

Now I was as full of the idea of the castle of Inverlochy as possible, when these heroes carried me away. The strength of this venerable pile is wonderful. Mr. Gray has told us how they built these strange walls. There was a frame of boards made of their height and breadth, into which dissolved lime, and stones of all sizes and sorts were poured: when these consolidated, the frame was taken away, and the wall was everlasting. Pray thank me for your first lesson in architecture, which, at any rate, will do you no harm.

* We visited this relique the day we parted.

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Now I am going to commit to your prudent secrecy a flight among the clouds, which I ventured in a very stormy day, and a very melancholy hour:

Rave on, ye demons of the storm!
The skies disturb, the seas deform,
And urge the whirling blast!
Commix the waves in wild uproar,
And howl along the desert shore,
While nature shrinks aghast!

From the dark chambers of the sky,
I see the lurid lightnings fly
With quick illusive glance;
While thunders, murmuring from afar,
Proclaim the elemental war,
And nearer still advance.

Methinks, with horrid joy elate,
Avenging ministers of fate
Now mount the whirlwind's wing;
And, while they trace their destin'd path,
Tremendous pour the vial'd wrath
Of nature's awful King!

Rage on, ye blasts! unmov'd by fear,
Your fierce conflicting strife I hear;
For what have I to dread?
Not storms, whose fury rends the sky,
Nor thunder, pealing from on high,
Awake th' unconscious dead.

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Since dead to hope, and love, and joy,
Why should your pow'r my peace destroy,
Or break my mournful calm?
Your deepest base, your loftiest tone,
Grateful to me, and me alone,
I feel, like sorrow's balm.

Thus, pleas'd, the sea fowl cry aloud,
While, toss'd aloft, from cloud to cloud,
With heedless course they roam;
With stern delight, unmix'd with care,
They wander thro' the troubled air,
Like me, without a home!

This, you say, is an exaggeration, for both the sea-fowl and I shall find our home in due time. True; but this is the language of deep despondency, which aggravates every thing, and looks to no future comfort. The poetry of sorrow, however real the sorrow may be, sees images through mist, and enlarges them. In these cases, where there is imagination and an ear for harmony that predispose one to it, solitude and sadness very naturally lead the mind "to feed on thoughts that voluntary move harmonious numbers." This amusement may tend to soothe and to refine the mind, but

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whether one is the happier for refinement, is a doubtful case; though I were wise enough, I am too drowsy for decision. The account of my journey must also be deferred till to-morrow, when, I trust, my head will be clearer, and my heart lighter. I will tell you of the diabolical quotation which occurred to me on entering the chamber which is to be mine:

"Receive thy new possessor, one who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by time or place."

I left my narrative yesterday to mount the clouds and chase phantoms. I am now very sick, and very sober, and resolved to be methodical. If I grow worse, our correspondence will terminate in the only way it ever shall; if not, I must attend my wonted duties, and lay down my pen. But this day is mine, and shall, therefore, be your's. Know, then, beloved, that the Glenmore, or Great Valley, is an opening from sea to sea, across Scotland, through some of the wildest parts of the Highlands. On the east, the spacious frith of Cromarty, at the head of which lies Inverness, runs up between

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between Ross shire and Murray, a great way inward, till it reaches the Highlands; then, on the west, you sail in between Appin, Lesmore, and Mull, till you come to Loch Linnhe, an inlet of the sea, on which Fort William stands. A little further, as you go towards Fort Augustus, you meet with the Lochy, a river which, coming in a westward course from Loch Lochy, discharges itself into Lochinnhe, at the old castle of Inverlochy, properly signifying the discharge of the Lochy. Over brown and unvaried moors, we travelled, still in sight of this short river, till we arrived at its parent lake, long, narrow, and remarkable for nothing, but its occupying some miles of the Glenmore, and, having had the last battle between adverse clans fought on its banks, which are a dull flat. What gives it interest is, that, when you arrive at the end of it, you see and feel yourself in the centre betwixt the two seas, and see at once the Lochy and the Oich on each side of you, running in opposite directions, one making its way through Loch Linnhe to the west sea,

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and the other through Loch Ness into the Murray Firth, on the east. It is those fast-following lakes, linked by filial streams, that form the opening which the three forts were meant to guard, and which, they say, invites art to the aid of nature in forming a canal, that should, in a manner, divide Scotland; but that will be the business of a wiser and a richer century*. I should have told you, in the right place, of my passing High-bridge, eight or nine miles, I think, from Fort William. It crosses the Spean, a small river, which, rushing down from the central mountains, has worn a channel of astonishing depth. Over this, two shrubby craggs project. The bridge is thrown across from the one to the other, and the arches, founded in the river, are ninety feet high. You know how little I understand, or care for buildings; but fine bridges cast over deep chasms, have that kind of grandeur that seizes on my gothic imagination. The effect of this one must be forcible, I should think, on every mind. After so much

* This prediction is now fulfilling.

dreary

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dreary moor, the shrubbery and verdure about it refresh the eye; and the simple majesty of these lofty arches forms a fine contrast to the noble, though irregular piles of rock-work, which they connect. The "boiling" and "wheeling" of the waters below animate the view; and even its dizzy horror pleases, after the long pause of dreary stillness you have just quitted. Another far-seen object gives sad variety to the prospect, before you leave the languid sameness towards Loch Lochy; it is Lochiel and the ruins of Achnacarrie, once the mansion of the gentle chieftain of the Camerons*. I call him gentle, because he really was so. His disposition was milder, his manners softer, and his mind more cultivated than those of his companions in misfortune, to use a soft word. He was like Brutus among the conspirators, whom you used to admire in the play:

"The

* The estate of this respectable exile, forfeited in the year 1745, has been by his present Majesty restored to his descendant, the present Lochiel.

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" The rest did what they did in envy of great Cæsar,
He only, in a general honest thought," &c. &c.

No man sacrificed more domestic comfort to mistaken principle. No man had clearer views of the fatal result. In vain he endeavoured to dissuade the adventurer, who landed near his house, from carrying on his ill-supported project. When he saw his doubts were misconstrued into fear, he took a tender leave of his family, and plunged into the gulf where he foresaw destruction. Can I possibly quit Achnacarrie, without proudly reciting an instance of the generous attachment of the tenants to their exiled chief. His estate was forfeited, and they paid the usual rent to the Crown; besides this, they voluntarily paid a rent to support Lochiel's family abroad. When the demesne was taken by some friends for their behoof, the tenants stocked it with cattle of all kinds. This too was a pure benevolence; and to this my grandfather, one of that faithful band, amply contributed.—Mr. Gray is provoked at my stupidity, in not being lost in

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in admiration and astonishment at the military roads. Highbridge, which makes a part of them, I do admire, but have no clear apprehension of their general beauty, or wonderful usefulness. I do not just take it for granted, that they are to civilize the country so speedily and effectually; the people were very *civil* when they were wel treated; they were so agile and familiar with their own bye-paths, and so accustomed to go

> " Over moor, over mire,
> Thro' bush, and thro' briar,"

that I am not clear they will always forsake their old short cut, for the pleasure of going ten miles round on hard gravel. These roads will afford access to strangers, who dislike and despise the natives, because they do not understand them; and to luxuries they cannot afford to pay for, and would be happier without. Early accustomed to savage life, I have not the horror at it that wiser people have. As far as merely regards this world, I am not sure how much my old Mohawk friends have to gain by being civilized; nor

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are my expectations very sanguine of the felicity which more knowledge of good and evil will produce here. They know the plain, the narrow path, which revelation has traced out to a happy immortality; and what more can they know, that will not be vanity and vexation of spirit, to a country which nature meant to be poor. I am sure savages have more useful and pleasing knowledge than people imagine, were it only that of birds and plants.

This, perhaps, is saying too much; but I am so provoked at seeing shallow, artificial people, who have no ideas but what they borrow, treating the inventive children of the wild with scorn. Those who pace all their lives on in an even-paved road, doing every day just what they did yesterday, are unable to estimate the powers of those, who must bend their mind every hour to some new and unpremeditated exertion.—After we passed the centre of the Glenmore, where the waters divide, I was much pleased to find woody hills, and green plains, narrow, but beautiful, opening before me. Laggana-

chadrom

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chadrom charmed me: it seemed so rural, so peaceful, and so social. Thinking what innocent sylvan beings dwelt in those huts, I contemplated them with secret pleasure; and so would you, knowing no more than I did. I am sure there were forty distinct buildings spread out on a smooth little plain, of the softest, freshest verdure. The broad end of Loch Oich, the prettiest of all possible lakes, forms the base of this triangular plain: the steep green hill of Letterfinlay, on the slope of which the light foliage of the drooping birch waved in the evening gale, formed one side, and the variegated slopes and broken copses on the Glengarry side, the other. Mr. Gray had returned. We had a boy, very smart and intelligent, who took care of our horses. Lost in contemplation, we were enjoying this pastoral scenery, when we were interrupted with "Ladies, the greatest thieves in all the country live in these houses." We were shocked, but found, upon inquiry, that this sweet hamlet was really inhabited by the only remaining horde of those plunderers, who

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who used to consider making a *spreath* as a gallant exploit; now, a spreath was carrying away forcibly a herd of cattle, and fighting their way through all opposition. I felt a kind of horror on finding that the cluster of innocent peasants' cottages I had been admiring, was merely a den of thieves. I now began to hold the military road, and civilizing the natives, in all due reverence. Nay, such a complete convert was I become, that I felt inclined to admire a happy thought of a worthy good-natured Irishman, Governor Caulfield, at Fort George, who most poetically exclaimed,

"Had you seen these roads before they were made,
You would hold up your hands, and bless Marshal Wade."

I wish I could share with you the pleasure I felt, in admiring, in a sweet still May evening, the scenery round *Loch Oich* and Invergarrie; the declining sun was shining, immediately after one of those soft warm showers that steal silently down, refreshing all nature, and awakening the whole woodland melody. A blackbird, on one side of Loch Oich,

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poured out the fullest strain of wild music I ever heard; while a wood-lark, from the streaming birch-trees on the other side, seemed emulous of his notes, and was more sweetly liquid, though not so loud. Do the birds really sing sweeter here, or does the wild scenery of these narrow vales reverberate the sound, and produce a tone of feeling more accordant to the music of nature? I never before felt the magic spell of sweet-according sounds so powerful. O! how I wished for some one to share a luxury that wealth cannot purchase, and that thousands are not born to taste!

"O! blind to truth, to virtue blind,
Who slight the sweetly pensive mind,
On whose birth the Graces mild,
And every Muse prophetic smil'd."

"These are the spirits born to know and prove,
All nature's charms immense, and heaven's unbounded love."

From this trance I was waked by a bright gleam of the parting sun, which threw its yellow

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yellow radiance on the opposite windows of Invergarrie house. This has all the characteristic features of the seat of a Highland chieftain—the lake, with little wooded islands, that seemed to float on the calm surface before it; the rapid river rushing down from the mountains, pouring its full stream into the lake beside it; the remaining tower of the ancient castle frowning proudly on the modern house; the long habitable glen opening back from the mansion of the chief, embosomed in woods and rocks, and animated by clusters of warm peaceful hamlets. From these every peasant rushes to arms, when his master's honour or safety is endangered: here every man is a hunter, a fisher, and an architect, in his own way; and there is a musician in every house, and a poet in every hamlet.

Alas! for me, that am "of language strange," and have returned to the land of my forefathers, with only this *Chaldean* English. "Dark sayings on the harp" are dark indeed to me.

I greatly

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I greatly wish you saw Glengarry*, it is so picturesque; the glen that ascends from it, instead of narrowing, as usual, grows broader, as it retires back, till you arrive at Loch Garrie, from whence the river of that name descends. The castle, surrounded by a very respectable garden of old renown, is half a mile west of the house. Rich cornfields, a great relief to the eye, after the *brown desert*, fill up the interval; and westward from the castle, Killanan, gently sloping, verdant and diversified, closes the prospect with due solemnity: for there the family burial place, a pretty large inclosure, shaded with lofty old trees, arrests the attention. I think the mind broods with more calm and steady attention over the last refuge of mortality, when appropriated in this manner to a particular set of people, whom the imagination can grasp and follow, than

* Macdonnel of Glengarry is head of a considerable branch of that powerful clan, who spell their names in that manner to distinguish them from the Macdonalds of the Isles, attached to Lord Macdonald.

over

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over the resting places of unknown multitudes, where thought wanders in forlorn confusion "along the waste dominions of the dead." You must muse alone, as much as I have done, before you can be capable of penetrating the gloom of a paragraph so sublimely obscure as my last. Tombs, like heroes, have a peculiar attraction for me, I cannot get quietly past them.—After having thus transgressed and digressed, I shall keep you at Invergarrie, to view the back ground towards the north, where the prospect rises into the most blue, aërial, and fantastic groupe of broken rocks and mountains I ever beheld. Through these you can neither ride nor properly walk, but the natives contrive to swim and creep, and wade and leap, much in the way Satan did when he visited the "Anarch old," and then they arrive at another estate belonging to Glengarry, on the sea-side, a wondrous region, called Knoidart, where there are no first floors at all, but all is garret or cellar; inaccessible precipices, overhanging mountains, and glens narrow, abrupt, and cut through with deep ravines, combining

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combining with rapid streams, dark pools, and woods so intricate, that the deer can scarce find their way through them. Yet the natives are looked upon as happier than others. Redundant grass and luxuriant heath afford abundance to their cattle, who are never housed in winter. Deer, wild fowl, and fish, are in great plenty; salmon, in particular, crowd their rivers, and shell-fish of all kinds abound on their rugged coasts. All this they enjoy without a rival or competitor, for who could go for it, or carry it away? Bread indeed is a foreign luxury with them, they raising little or no corn; a ship however comes once or twice a year, and brings them a supply of meal in exchange for butter and cheese. This is the asylum of the catholics; all who live in the country are of that profession, and, wonderful to tell, a gentleman of family, great learning, genteel manners, and most spotless life, a bishop of their communion, spends his life in this truly savage abode; he has no other motive but the desire of doing good to those who can make him no adequate recompence. There too, in the most

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most secluded recess of these wilds, in a corner so obscure that the sun can scarce shine on it, is a seminary, where boys are educated for the priesthood, (that is, prepared for foreign seminaries,) through very great poverty and hardship. Sure these people imagine they suffer for conscience sake; and, absurd as their tenets are, to say the best of them, we must not think they can dissemble for a whole lifetime, nor have we room to think, that any one can lead a self-denying and upright life without the divine aid. I fear we poor creatures are merciless to each other; I don't like to think of their opinions, yet am happy when I hear of the gold of good intention glittering through the dross of error.—How I have wandered! but the thing nearest my heart, now that I care so little for most worldly matters, is to shew to you every object in the clearest light in which it appears to myself. I would carry you with me wherever I go; I would teach you to think, that you might supply the defect of timely tuition, by giving, yourself, some culture to that excellent understanding.

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standing. Your mind is too good a soil to run to waste. When I think of your native taste, your delicacy of feeling, and that rectitude of judgment which is your peculiar excellence, I grieve that you know so few who comprehend what you possess, or know what you are capable of acquiring. How pleasing to see the beauties of such a mind expanding! (Will that pleasure ever again be mine?) Let me suppose it, in the mean time, a mirror, in which the images that pass through mine will be reflected. I cannot think how any one who has ever tasted the rich banquet of intellectual pleasure, mingled with the sweets of friendship, can exist deprived of it. Sure the Lotos that Ulysses' friends found, was something like it: no wonder they would not come away. If I did not think of you, and could not write to you, how forlorn I should be, and how little would "the charm of earliest birds," or the wild scenes of enchantment, that rise here and there amidst the *brown desert*, avail to comfort me. Adieu, my dear. It is time to leave off "*chewing* the food

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food of sweet and bitter fancy." Good night.

LETTER XIV.

TO MISS REID.

Fort Angustus, May 25, 1773.

SMALL heart have I to write, and can as yet tell you little of Fort Augustus. It was dark before we descended to the house which is to be ours; of which I can only say, that it stands in something like a grove, and that this grove rises on a point at the confluence of the Oich with Loch Ness. We drank tea with our predecessor's family; they are still convalescents. - - - - - - The clergyman of the place* was the only stranger; of whom I was previously told that he was handsomer than any body: he appeared more modest than most handsome men, who are less tolerable, I think, than mere

* Rev. James Grant, afterwards Minister of Laggan.

handsome

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handsome women. - - - - - - - They cannot remove for ten days, and here am I very much indisposed " in the worst inn's worst room;" and, to mend the matter, just above the best bed-room, where all strangers are received; and worse still, this room has a vocal floor, like the one at Luss. Oh! for a carpet! the only luxury (not intellectual) that I have longed for since I left you.—Worse and worse—if I do not get better, remember the last word I write is my benediction to you.

LETTER XV.

TO COLLECTOR MACVICAR, ON THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE OF HIS DAUGHTER.

Fort Augustus, May 25, 1773.

MY DEAR SIR,

I KNOW not how to console you, nor indeed how to mention the event that has grieved

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grieved us all so much; yet, after all, this new connexion is a gentleman by birth and education.

Very great blame there certainly is, but a small part comparatively remains with those who are in a great measure sufferers from their own imprudence. The contrivers and abettors of this rash union are more deserving of your anger than the parties themselves. Marriages thus hasty and clandestine have sometimes proved fortunate beyond all expectation. It was perhaps too great a charge for a creature so young and lovely, without a protector of her own sex, to manage a family, and be obliged to entertain all kinds of company. I know—I am certain, your heart must relent towards her, when you consider fully of it. The regiment I am told is ordered abroad; they may be years without meeting; she will return home penitent and thoughtful, to take charge of your affairs; and, her fate being now fixed, will have no object to draw off her attention.

I am confined here; and reading some of the

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the books I had from you is my only consolation! When I am well enough to write more at large, I shall endeavour to amuse you with my crude opinions, for which I shall make no apology, as it is in compliance with your own desire. I am, very sincerely,

Yours, with much esteem.

LETTER XVI.

TO COLLECTOR MACVICAR.

Fort Augustus, May 28, 1773.

MY DEAR SIR,

SINCE I wrote to you last, I have been most intent on biography, and quite engrossed by heroes and legislators. I am afraid and ashamed, after all my promises of frankness, to tell you who is my favourite. When I look up to the great legislator of the north, like Shenstone's little boys,

" I do in passing wonderment abound,
And think *he* been the greatest wight on ground."

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I am astonished and borne down with the force of that mighty mind, which burst all the golden chains of imperial pomp and prejudice,—which came streaming like the aurora borealis, to pour its splendors on the regions of darkness; and which stooped like the fabled Antæus, to gain strength from the earth, and rise with fresh vigour. Self-abasement, matchless patience, and stubborn perseverance, virtues dealt sparingly to the hero kind, were his pre-eminently. I survey his new creation with astonishment; I see him presiding at the birth of intellect with reverence; and yet, I respect and admire, without loving or esteeming this extraordinary character. He was a heartless barbarian after all; his views were often just and always great, but he did not care whom or what he trampled on, to attain to the completion of them. Only think of him, like another Herod, sacrificing so many hundred innocents to his preposterous salt-water experiment. It was an insolent and impious attempt to conquer nature. Then how many thousands fell victims to his ambition

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bition of building that shocking town Petersburgh! He might have made the principal street of *dead men's bones* (as children say of London Bridge in the old ballad) provided he applied the remains of the poor peasants to that purpose. *Five hundred thousand* people to he sacrificed with such cool deliberation, to create a sea-port! I am sure, though he did conquer nature there, it was a dear-bought victory. Which of Shakespeare's heroes is it that says with such bitter regret,

> " If I am forced
> To draw this sword to be a widow-maker,
> Bear witness heaven, &c. &c.

That was generous, open war; fatal and depopulating at best, no doubt, yet a field for noble exertions, and for the display of some shining qualities. But to go calmly and coolly with a hatchet and a trowel to be a widow-maker to such an extent,—I have no patience with the cold-hearted tyrant. If you *will* know what I think of him, you must not call it prudery when I express insuperable disgust at his marriage, and at the

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blind admiration which that circumstance of his life has excited. To divorce his wife without a pretext,—to give the example to a great empire, which he professed to enlighten and reform,—of a father's bringing, not merely his own mistress, but the mistress of other men, to rule over his family, to be the mother-in-law of his son, the heir of that vast empire! What father could place confidence in his son, or give him lessons of virtue, when conscious that he had forfeited all claim to his reverence? What husband, what father can find felicity exclusive of his family? What laurels, what eulogies can extract the sting of domestic misery? The wretched, withered heart, pines unrefreshed, like Gideon's fleece, that lay dry, while all nature shared the genial influence of the dews of heaven. On the evil consequences resulting to society, from breaking down the partition wall which separates the undeviating from contagion, volumes might be written, replete with instruction, corroborated by facts. But a single fact selected from the life of this mighty legislator, contains the essence of

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volumes; it is that of beheading a gentleman of his bed-chamber, a handsome favourite of the empress, on the mere surmise that this favour extended beyond due limits. You will recollect too that the Czar had his head exposed on a pole in the pathway, and he drove out his happy empress in a sledge past the *pole*. She did not ask what head it was, nor did he make the least allusion to it. What easy intercourse, what perfect confidence! Now there could be only two ways of viewing this circumstance; Catherine was guilty, or she was not. If she was guilty, how peculiarly aggravated was that guilt; how depraved was that mind; how vicious those habits; how hardened that ingratitude; which, in spite of the light of her own excellent understanding; in spite of the dangers and spies that surrounded her, could add a deeper blot to all former stains, and could look with cool dissimulation on the dreadful result of her crime! Now, had Peter, as he ought to have done, if convinced of her guilt, hurled her down to contempt and infamy, the world

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would have approv'd the justice of his vengeance, and her memory would perish with the opprobrium of that very world, which now applauds her because she was prudent and fortunate. Add the reflection, of what life a man of a great mind and strong passions must afterwards lead, with a person whose infidelity and ingratitude he was convinced of; how the mere shame of having debased himself by such an alliance, must have made him swallow his injuries. Consider too, how totally that delicacy, which inhabits every pure and noble mind, must be extinguished, before a man could live on with a person whom he inwardly despised. Say, then, that in a rash fit of jealousy, he, a legislator, a self-conqueror, neither young nor romantic, had taken the life of a man whom he afterwards found reason to believe innocent? Can there be a stronger testimony of the disquiet, distrust, and restless perturbation, which must result from such an alliance? Othello talks of

"The minutes he tells o'er
Who doats, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves."

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What then must be his fate, who begins his married life by laying a broad and just foundation for jealousy? What woman who hopes for protection, would marry a known coward? Is life, or any thing pertaining to it, so dear as that honour, that very existence of his family, which a man intrusts to his wife? Though surrounded with glory, and admired by all the world, is it to be wondered at, that the Great Peter so often drowned in wine the bitterness of reflection? Had he built fewer ships and towns, and begun his great work with reforming the morals of his subjects by his own example, his work might have been slower, perhaps, but it would have been surer. Elegance and refinement are easily added to wisdom and virtue, they are indeed produced by them; when a man is brought to think rightly and act justly, his taste improves apace; and we see all over the world, where virtue languishes, the arts decay. I must return to justify my limited admiration of your favourite hero, who I suspect stands the higher with you for being an artist, like

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your own duke Archibald. How a man should be great without generosity, seems wonderful; and yet great he was, and generous he was not: no, not in a single recorded instance. His promoting foreigners, who would not stay among his bears without promotion, I should only call sound policy. I shall not detail what every page evinces; I will not grate my feelings with the recollection of the accumulated cruelty and injustice which sent the brave Swedes, prisoners of war, gentlemen, and servants of a generous and heroic master, to expiate the crime of obedience in the deserts of Siberia; which sent generals, who had struck terror into the heart of Moscow, and dazzled all Europe with the splendor of their actions, to build huts in Siberia with their own hands, and teach his half rational slaves to plant turnips on the banks of the Oby. To sum up all, I consider Peter as a man wise and brave without virtue. Perhaps his hard unbending character was as well calculated to make political reforms in Russia, as the sanguine and ferocious temper of John Knox, for

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for making religious ones in Scotland.—I will not apologize. You bid me read biography, to teach me to think; I have thought, and here is the result. If I have not made you very angry, I will next give my thoughts of his rival hero. Will you, dear Sir, continue to think that I respect your opinions, reverence your judgment, and shall always be your obliged friend and obedient servant.

LETTER XVII.

TO COLLECTOR MACVICAR.

Fort Augustus, May 30, 1773.

I rejoice, dear Sir, that you are pleased with my sincerity, and not *displeased* with my enthusiasm. I hope it will not, as you seem to think, evaporate with you. I trust I shall be an enthusiast in friendship, and in the love of virtue and of nature, all the days of my life. How could spirits, aspiring

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after something better than this world affords, exist in this gloomy uncongenial clime without it? When torpor threatens to chill the soul, enthusiasm warms and animates it; when the mind tends to be languid and enervated, it invigorates and braces it. 'Tis the fan of a warm climate, and the fur of a cold one. Who ever did much good to others, without a degree of enthusiasm, to loosen the faculties from their cohesion with self-love? I will no longer bewilder myself among figures, for I see you ready to compare me to Hudibras,

> "Who could not ope
> His mouth but out there flew a trope."

Yet is not enthusiasm pardonable, when about to enter on the discussion of a life of wonders, where all is true yet nothing probable? Even the right marvellous life of Charles the Twelfth?—The unfortunate have few friends. This remark is neither so trite nor so invidious in my application of it as it may at first appear; we are not always malignant, but we are very often lazy; peoples misfortunes are so often owing to their own misconduct,

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misconduct, that, without examining into particulars, we are ready to take it for granted in most cases, and become unjust, to save ourselves the trouble of candid investigation. Never was there a human being whose character was more modelled by peculiarities in his situation and education; by irresistible impulses from without and from within, all driving him on to that ardent extreme, to which his natural temper too forcibly inclined. Reared under a father cold and stern; defectively educated; taught from childhood to value nothing but military glory; left so very young to act for himself, and surrounded by people little skilled in the elegant arts, who had not learned to estimate truly the softer graces and milder virtues of civilized life—Young, inexperienced, yet full of valour, generosity, and integrity, a storm broke around him, which involved all his future life in tempests. The perfidious confederacy of the three royal robbers, who, under the mask of friendship, had agreed to take advantage of the minority of a brother sovereign, to despoil him of his

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crown, and divide his territories, while it called forth the military talents of the young prince, to prompt and astonishing exertion, gave, at the same time, an inflexible bias to his mind. The more upright and pure he felt his own sentiments, the more indignation this conduct must have excited. There is no motive that could stimulate the human mind to persevering hostility, but what mingled in this case; revenge, which the provocation had almost exalted into virtue; the patriot passion burning for his injured country; emulation, excited by rivals, brave, powerful, and invidious; the ardour of youthful enthusiasm animating

> "A frame of iron, and a soul of fire;"

and, finally, the

> "Fatal love of fame, that glorious heat,
> Only destructive to the brave and great."

Stern, obstinate, and uncultured, highly exasperated and signally victorious; what was the conduct of this prince, when the proud city of Copenhagen lay at the feet of a victor, scarce seventeen? Piety, moderation, clemency,

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mency, and magnanimity, marked every step of his progress. Had he not outlived that year, it would have been very unjust to characterize him as a mere warrior. Even then he was something more, and something better. After granting terms dictated by lenity and probity to this faithless enemy, let us view his conduct to the more faithless Czar, after the victory at Narva; that victory whose rapidity distanced belief, while its splendor dazzled imagination. Still we find him acting with the generosity of a true hero, and the courtesy of a preux chevalier, without fear or reproach; ascribing all glory to the God of battles, and treating the vanquished with unequalled humanity. Could it be expected, that, in the midst of this brilliant and rapid career, he should readily listen to terms of accommodation, dictated by those very fears that insured his future victories; from an enemy too, who had planned the destruction of his country?—Would the great Gustavus, wise and pious as he was, have done it in the same circumstances? Besides, he was actuated by the spirit

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spirit of chivalry, and considered his courage as the gift of Providence, bestowed upon him to redress the injured and protect the weak. How different would be the judgment of the world, regarding his conduct in Poland, had success attended him to the end of his career! Was not Augustus a perjured prince, without honour or morality; who governed by intrigue, broke every compact, and violated every duty, both to his Saxon and Polish subjects? What did Charles do, but remove him from a throne which he had degraded to venality, and stained by his vices? He sent him back to Saxony, which he should never have left. Finding that the Poles, corrupted by the example of a king, at whose deposition they rejoiced, had neither virtue nor concord remaining, sufficient for the purposes of a free election, he pointed out to them a young man, noble, brave, virtuous, and candid, to whom he seemed attracted by congenial rectitude of mind, and who represented one of their most illustrious families. Why does not the scene close here? Why not stop, while

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while we have the pleasure of contemplating this extraordinary man, with hands un stained by cruelty and injustice, and a heart pure from every sinister motive, "acknowledged lord of pleasure and of pain," neither to be attracted by the one, nor repelled by the other; dispensing crowns and dignities with the most disinterested liberality; receiving the homage of the north and the splendid embassies of the east, with unvarying modesty; and uniting in his habits of life the activity and ardour of a soldier, with the simplicity and abstemiousness of an anchorite? He indeed was a hero to his valet de chambre, for he had nothing to conceal, nothing to be ashamed of. But who could drink so deep of the cup of prosperity, without being in some degree intoxicated? Who can pass through life without committing some fault, the consequences of which cloud and embitter it? His treatment of Patkul was indeed very barbarous; I never think of it without horror, and feel little inclined to be the advocate of cruelty: but, from the undeviating rectitude of

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of his general conduct, this being the sole instance in which he was charged with injustice, it is but candid to suppose, he considered himself as inflicting death on a traitor. The manner of it is not to be palliated; it is a great but a single stain. His subsequent schemes of ambition were doubtless extravagant and injudicious; and the rashness of endeavouring to combat the elements and subdue nature, in his march to Pultowa, was still more so. Yet he led his men to no hardships that he did not share with them; he was certainly deceived by flatterers, who attacked him on his only vulnerable side, by persuading him he could overcome difficulties, from their nature insurmountable. Can you withhold your pity and your admiration from him in that sad crisis of his fate, when the sun of his prosperity set, to rise no more; or when he bore the utmost bodily pain, and the most wringing anguish that a great mind can suffer, without a change in his countenance or temper? Can any thing equal his fortitude and patience in Turkey, or his wild heroism

at

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at Bender, where his liberality and simple manners, his unstained morals and undaunted mind, won reverence and affection from the very Janizaries; or his unshaken perseverance in Demetica, where he lay eleven months in bed, in perfect health, to escape the risk of degradation, to him the greatest of evils? I own his reign was a misfortune to his people: I confess it was happy for him and them that it terminated so soon; when exasperation, injuries, and disappointments, had driven him to a kind of obstinate desperation. Yet still I admire and regret him, and look upon him as a man, brave and virtuous, without wisdom; whose great qualities may be safely admired, without the least danger of their being imitated. He is unique, and will continue so. You wonder at my preference, but I cannot give much of my admiration without some of my esteem. Again, this self-subdued hero serves to establish my favourite maxim: without self-denial and self-conquest, I have no idea of any consistent virtue. Who can depend for a moment, on a character open to

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to all the attacks of passion, all the allurements of pleasure? A case like his, where so many causes concurred to urge him on to pursuits so fatal and pernicious, can occur but very seldom. But what soldier, emulous of his well-won fame, would not benefit by imitating his temperance, his probity, his contempt of pleasure, and his abhorrence of meanness? Peace to his shade! which has doubtless, ere now, claimed kindred with a far more amiable hero; but his only equal in unwearied perseverance, romantic and extravagant courage, unconquerable strength of mind and body, and unblemished purity of morals. You have found out, ere now, that I mean our own unequalled Wallace. They both early began the race of glory; both stemmed the torrent of adversity with unshaken fortitude; both refused honours and dignities with steady magnanimity; and both, at a very early period, fell victims to misfortune. Our hero had a manifest superiority in the uprightness of his motives. Unbiassed by ambition or vanity, he lived and died a generous patriot. Conqueror to the

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the last, he subdued the rigour of his fate by the calm cheerfulness with which he met it. The noble sentiments he displayed in the last scene of suffering, overcame the resentment of a hostile nation, so that

"His fair fame, with clear and radiant blaze,
Spreads and grows brighter with the lapse of days."

So far the Scot has the advantage of the Swede; a proof that the world is not always unjust. I have been tedious on this favourite theme. I wish to hear your criticism. Though I am sanguine, like Wallace, I am not obstinate like Charles, and shall yield up my errors to your correction, with all due submission. I am, &c. &c.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MISS REID.

Fort Augustus, June 6, 1773.

My dear, I have been so sick and so studious, and so willing to please and amuse the

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the Collector, under his late severe affliction, that I have given you, and our trusty and well beloved Bell, room to suppose I have already forgot you. My right hand was at one time very near forgetting her cunning; but my heart, like poor Maria's, is still warm, and while it beats I shall tenderly remember you both. Your letter is, like yourself, all truth, nature, and candour. Don't be discouraged; there lies no fair comparison between us. Forced to read and think from childhood, for want of brother, sister, or companion of my own age; toss'd from place to place, and early accustomed to the society of my superiors in age and knowlege; what should my mind do but unfold? You had every disadvantage; I shall never be other than I am, but you will every day improve.—I had no pleasure in writing to you of that marriage which I knew you would hear of but too soon. I certainly should make a very bad Duenna. She is a strange creature, and could not be improved. Her pride was in high company, but her pleasure in low; for her equals she never

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never cared, and reading I never could get her to relish. How very vigilant my good angel was the day before I left Oban, when I took that strange sudden desire to come away, which has been so much for my peace and credit! The very night I left them, this marriage took place; it was celebrated in the garden during an ominous shower of snow, with no other witnesses than that happy pair who had acted the same part themselves so lately. Unhappy creature, what a fond parent has she plunged into grief and disappointment! He had great hopes of her; her beauty and plausibility warranted them. - - - - - - Love to our Bell. I can tell you nothing of the place. My cough has been drowned in decoctions of mountain herbs, given me by the best woman in the world, who keeps this house; I should have died but for her. I have not gone down stairs yet, and am at a loss with this *pervious* floor, whether to wish myself deaf, or all the guests dumb. If uncle Francis, with his irritable nerves were here, it would either kill or cure him. Do you know I have not been

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been in Eumaus's pig-house this month, which you used to say was my favourite haunt.—The poor dear Odyssey is quite neglected; I have forsaken it for biography; I can speak of nobody less than a king or a general, and shall take the first opportunity of introducing you to prince Mazeppa. Tweed and Clyde are not worth a farthing now, I can think of nothing but the Dneiper and the Boristhenes. I have some toleration too for the Wolga. "O voman, voman!" as Win Jenkins says, "If you knew but the pleshur we scullers have when we censter the crabbit werds." You see spirits will return with health, but you must expect no more bulky letters from your unchangeable, &c.

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LETTER XIX.

TO MISS REID.

Fort Augustus, June 15, 1773.

I WILL describe this place to you, if I can. It is a miniature of New York as to situation, and upon that you have often heard me descant; only this is on a very small scale. The village, and remains of the old fort, stand on a little rising ground above the Oich, a sweet wild-murmuring stream, that comes down on the north side from Loch Oich and Glengarry: on the south side, the Tarffe steals through deep-wooded glens from the Corryarick, and wanders, at length, through a meadowy low valley, bounded by very steep woody braes, on the garrison side, and a mountain, gentle in its ascent, verdant and cultivated half-way up, on the other, surrounded by rugged rocks, that seem to frown sullenly on the sweet scenes below.

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The fort stands on the brink of the lake, near the centre, and the Oich and Tarffe discharge their pure streams into it on each side. Next the lake, the Governor has created a most picturesque shrubbery and garden in the dry ditch that surrounds the fort, and has covered the wall with fruit-trees, and hid the masked battery with laurels. That beautiful spot the glacis, is almost an Island: the village looks down on it from the west; on the north and south it is inclosed by the Tarffe and Oich, a bridge crossing each, parallel with the fort; on the east, Loch Ness forms a noble boundary, with its pier, and solitary vessel, which the vastness of the surrounding objects diminishes to a toy. The fort too appears the prettiest little thing you can imagine. You would suppose some old veteran had built himself a house with a ditch and drawbridge, to remind him of his past exploits. I have not been in it yet, but the barracks form the walls, and they are so white and clean-looking, and the bastions so green and rural, and it is so fancifully planted round with the moun-

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mountain-ash, you would think Vertumnus commanded here, and had garrisoned the fort with Dryads. The lake, which opens in a long vista below, reflects this fairy fortress; and a still more rural scene, a little to the north, on a long fantastic-looking point, at the junction of the Oich with the lake, stands my father's house, surrounded with tall ash-trees and gardens. Very near it is that of the commander of this solitary vessel. The serene grandeur of this lake in a calm is not to be described. Bold, steep mountains rise on the south side; little retiring bays and sloping woods give variety to the north; and the reflection is so fine; nothing interrupts it for twenty-four miles, at the end of which, the lake discharges, through the short rapid river Ness, into the Murray Firth. The immediate scene, in short, is tranquil and beautiful, while the surrounding objects are all rude and majestic. About half a mile up the smiling meads that border the Tarffe, is the village burying-ground, a place of old renown, where many a soldier sleeps to wake no

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more. As I stood at the door in the afternoon, contemplating the scene I have tried to describe, a cannon, fired by the fort, and answered by the vessel, announced an approaching funeral. There was a soft shower, or rather heavy mist, which made every thing look fresh, but sad. Wreaths of thin clouds came down on the mountains, as if they too wore the veil of sorrow. The procession came out with muffled drums, and fifes playing a dead march. A fine youth, intimate with the deceased, and much about his age, walked as chief mourner, and seemed greatly affected; so was every creature. You can't think how touching it was to see a funeral, where every individual seemed sunk in the deepest sorrow. The mournful music, echoed by the rocks, followed the winding of the Tarffe till they reached the grave. I was chilled when the solemn pause ensued; and, when the discharge of muskets announced the close of the ceremony, I felt as if I were suddenly left alone,—such is the effect of scenery and music. Not that entirely,

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tirely, either; but, from having heard, besides, every one in the place agitated by hopes and fears about the deceased ever since we came here. He was the only son of a person in some employment about the royal household. A strong passion for a military life induced him to enter the regiment, quartered here last winter, as ensign. The superior officer, to whose charge he was entrusted, leaving the place the day before we came, his *protegé* went to see him over Corryarick. The captain, on parting with his young friend, discharged his musket, forgetting it had small shot in it: the young man's knee was shattered; he was carried back, and the amputation found necessary seemed, at first, successful. Sunday night, however, when all was thought secure, the bandages loosened, and he bled to death. He was so much beloved and pitied, that the operation and progress of the cure was every one's theme. I heard nothing through my vocal floor, but how Taafe was*, and

* Ensign Taafe of the 43d, whose father was Upholsterer to his Majesty.

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what Taafe said, and eulogiums, and regrets. Nobody is so lamented in town, because there people do not think long on any one thing.—Adieu. Night will seem long and dismal; but I can write no more.

LETTER XX.

TO COLLECTOR MACVICAR, OBAN.

Fort Augustus, June 20, 1773.

I AM sure, my dear Sir, you will incline to think me as mad as my hero, though you do not exactly say so. I suspect he was no favourite with Duke Archibald; whose opinions I suppose you respected many years ago, as I do your's now. I think, when you and he joined counsels about removing poor old Inverary, it was a very *Czarish* plan; and I fear it will soon be put in execution. If I had great ancestors, my domains would have a very grotesque appearance; for so much would my reverence for

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for antiquity combat my love of elegance, that I would not willingly remove a stone from the buildings they had reared.

I expect a kind and favourable answer to the intercessions in my last. I touch, with a trembling hand, on a subject so delicate; and would not touch it at all, if I were not pretty confident of assistance from an advocate in your own breast. In the mean time I will hope the best, and endeavour to pursue Oliver Cromwell through all his crooked paths. I have gone but a short way, my attention having been completely engrossed by a book that has bewitched me for the time; 'tis the Vicar of Wakefield, which you must certainly read. Goldsmith puts one in mind of Shakespear; his narrative is improbable and absurd in many instances, yet all his characters do and say so exactly what might be supposed of them, if so circumstanced, that you willingly resign your mind to the sway of this pleasing enchanter; laugh heartily at improbable incidents, and weep bitterly for impossible distresses. But his personages have all so much

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nature about them. Keep your gravity if you can, when Moses is going to market with the colt, in his waistcoat of gosling-green; when the Vicar's family make the notable procession on Blackberry and his companion; or, when the fine ladies dazzle the Flamboroughs with taste, Shakespear, and the musical glasses; not to mention the polemical triumphs of that redoubted monogamist the Vicar. 'Tis a thousand pities Goldsmith had not patience, or art, to conclude suitably a story so happily conducted; but the closing events rush on so precipitately, are managed with so little skill, and wound up in such a hurried and really bungling manner, that you seem hastily awaked from an affecting dream. Then miseries are heaped on the poor Vicar with such barbarous profusion, that the imagination, weary of such cruel tyranny, ends it, by breaking the illusion. I have too much indeed, anticipated your own observations; but my intention was to awake your curiosity, that you might share the pleasure

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pleasure this artless tale has afforded me.—To quit the flowery paths of ingenious fiction for the thorny maze in which I am slowly advancing, is no pleasing transition to female fancy. I make it the more reluctantly, as I have not yet duly considered the character I am pursuing. While he mounts the dizzy crags of ambition, by ways untried before, which he does not seem to have premeditated, I gaze with wonder, heightened by perplexity; trying, but vainly trying, to discover at what exact time he ceased to have at heart the public good, and that which he thought to be the interests of religion.

You see I take it for granted, he was sincere at first; and am the more convinced of this, as nothing could be more natural than the first steps of his progress. His early transition from a libertine to an enthusiast, is by no means wonderful. If a rash, impetuous libertine becomes at all devout, the same headlong fervour that hurried him down the precipice of vice, will animate him on his return to virtue. He

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will feel a more eager aspiration after superior attainments in spiritual improvement, than those who have not been misled, and a revolting horror at the allurements of vice, and all the delusions from whose power he has escaped. Hurrying as fast as possible to the opposite extreme, his speed will naturally kindle enthusiasm. This appears to have been precisely Cromwell's case at his outset.

The rigour of Laud soured him into a bigot. The vehement and declamatory style of preaching, which prevailed among his sect, heated him into a fanatic. When temporal views, mingling with spiritual, awaked the spark of ambition which lay hid under the specious pretence of zeal for reformation, hypocrisy began to take its turn to reign. It would be tedious and difficult to trace his progress; yet, marking these changes and gradations in his case, and that of others, would be no useless task. It would help us to a solution of many historical doubts, which, probably, became such by an impatience in writers to decide on the motives

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motives of actions, without developing the process of opinion; to cut, in short, the knot they would not take time to untie. It is certainly invidious, as well as injudicious, to brand all those with the stigma of hypocrisy, who were, by the opposition and clashing of parties, the stream of popular prejudices, and the tumult of popular commotions, hurried far beyond their intentions, and involved in a mass, from which there was no possible means of separating.

When we find him, who was not unjustly stigmatized as the arch-hypocrite of his day, sincerely pious at one period; we must learn that (when it is so necessary at different stages of life, and under different circumstances, to distinguish the same man from his former self) it becomes still more necessary, for the purpose of tracing back the causes and weighing the consequences of actions, that we should attend to the distinction of character among those who, though very different in their views, are, by slight observers, considered as one class. For instance, those who, having little piety,

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themselves, are not aware of its different effects on the minds of others, are very apt to confound all enthusiasts with bigots. Now an enthusiast sees the bright side of all objects. Except in one of those occasional fits of despondency, which are the common portion of morbid sensibility, his ardent mind gives a bright colouring to all things connected with the object of his desires and contemplations. He is highly benevolent, because the common state of depravity, and the common refuge of hope in an only Redeemer, form a strong tie betwixt him and those who have already, or may hereafter, become penitent like him:

"These share the joy that faith and hope supply."

Enthusiasm in devotion is thus perfectly compatible with cheerfulness of temper, and with the utmost liberality and good-will to all who worship the same God, more particularly those who hold their salvation by the same charter. We may perceive, by a little observation of characters which we are well acquainted with, that bigotry, so often

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often confounded with enthusiasm, is very unlike, indeed often opposite to it: it is a species of self-deception in those who substitute a strong attachment to certain peculiar opinions, with regard to the ordinances of the Divinity, for a love of his essence; and they mistake a certain vanity in exercising their faculties upon polemical subjects, for a delight in contemplating the divine perfections. A bigot may be (indeed often is) as sincere as an enthusiast; but his views do not tend to meliorate his temper, or enlarge his heart; they have rather the direct contrary effect. The transition from a bigot to a hypocrite is not necessary nor common, in ordinary circumstances. Yet a person who idolizes his opinions cannot abound in charity; and he, who does not love God well enough to love even his defaced and degraded image for his sake, is certainly in greater danger of being misled by self-interest, into a dereliction of his principles, than those whose hearts are warmed and expanded by their devotion. He may insensibly be led to cherish a degree of spiritual

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pride, teaching him to impose on others (and even on himself, if that were possible) austerity of manners and outward observances, for that religion "which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." In many instances, it would be the greatest presumption in any human being to say where bigotry ended, and hypocrisy began.

You may observe instances of Cromwell's leaders, especially those who commanded in Ireland, and executed what they called divine vengeance against the catholic garrisons, perpetrating such deeds of cruelty as human nature shudders at. Yet, so thoroughly satisfied were these men, that they were acting according to conscience, that they not only lived a self-denied and pious life ever after, but closed the scene on the scaffold, (upon the change of government) with serenity; professing their dependence on the Divine mercy, full of concern for "having fallen short of the glory of God," as they expressed it, and "being unprofitable servants;" yet not feeling the least apparent

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parent compunction for cruelties acted and ordered by them.

All this is not mere digression, though it may seem so; for if one did not read the history of that age of wonders with some attention to the shades and degrees of guilt, that were forced upon some by the rushing cataract of furious party-zeal in their associates, and which others slid into when once they departed in a slight degree from the unvarying path of rectitude, to do evil that good might come of it; if one did not attend to the gradations by which certain characters sunk in value and efficacy, and thus gave room to unprincipled individuals of the same party to take the lead; one should shrink back with horror from human nature itself, wearing such a deformed and disastrous aspect. The opposite parties, too, were too much exasperated to speak with truth and candour of each other. Yet even those barbarous factions, while they broke down restraints, so as to shew the human heart in its utmost deformity and depravity, produced many virtues, elicited much bravery,

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very, fidelity, and true patriotism, that would otherwise never have been roused into action. All this is not Cromwell. I have tired your patience, and my own, with this long letter; I shall therefore defer my opinion of him to another, which you must encourage me to write to you. I must only say at present, that I am not over-dazzled by his abilities: his was a life of contingencies, made or patched up out of the fragments of other people's broken systems; he lay on the watch for casual advantages, snatched them from friends and foes, and pursued them to the utmost. This, a man of plan or system could not have done. When he had converted his warmest friends into his bitterest enemies, his only hope of impunity was, by climbing up out of their reach. In his elevation he found his only safety; but the wretchedness of that elevation, the misery of ruling by cruel and incessant expedients, and living in perpetual dread, and dying at last of ceaseless and secret perturbations, afford a still stronger lesson against

"Vaulting

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" Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,"

than even that awful one which history and poetry have blended their powers to impress, in the instructive scenes of Macbeth. I have, as usual, wandered, but my hope and intention, dear Sir, is to amuse you; and that, perhaps, I may do as much by the starts and excursions of an unformed mind, as by methodically and consequentially detailing opinions not worthy your attention. I hope this will find your domestic peace established, and your mind reconciled to those evils which wisdom cannot prevent; though virtue, and, above all, that rarest virtue, patience, may convert them into blessings. Not a word more about Cromwell, till you tell me how I acquit myself in the untried region of criticism.

I am always,
with great esteem and deference,
Your obedient servant.

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LETTER XXI.

TO COLLECTOR MACVICAR.

Fort Augustus, June 30, 1773.

I REALLY cannot determine whether you, my dear Sir, are amusing yourself with harmless raillery at the expence of your too presumptuous correspondent, or, whether you mix serious opinions with a little grave irony. As I feel myself very unequal to meet you upon the ground of raillery, I shall willingly take it for granted, that you are "quite serious," and as seriously comply with your requisition. In short, I will endeavour to point out the sources whence this "premature information and reflection has been derived." Spirit of Biography! (Muse of Biography! methinks I should rather say) on what calm elevation dost thou reside, surrounded by the powers of just discrimination, candid discussion, and true delineation?—Could I trace thy

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abode far, far beyond the clouds of passion, and mists of prejudice, I would invoke thy assistance to portray a faint sketch of the useful and happy life, the estimable and singular character of the friend of my childhood, the instructress of my youth, and the existing model, in my mind, of the highest practical virtue. Madam, or Aunt Schuyler,* then,

* Aunt Schuyler's father was called Cuyler.—Lord Howe, killed in 1758, I think, at the lines of Ticonderoga; Lord Loudon; General, afterwards Lord Amherst; General Sir Thomas Gage; Sir William Johnson; and every other person who, during that period, acted any distinguished part in the Canadian war, were intimate in her family.—Aunt Schuyler lived in Albany, and was a descendant of those Dutch settlers by whom the province was occupied when we got it in exchange for Surinam. She was well known over all North America, and to all the British officers of any note, who served there in the war which concluded at the commencement of the present reign. Her father's name was Cuyler. Among the children brought up on Aunt Schuyler's knees, was her husband's nephew, General Philip Schuyler, to whom the British troops under Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga;—and Brigadier General Cuyler, her own nephew,

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then, for so, by universal consent, she was indiscriminately called, in the province of New York, was daugter to one of the first and most respectable characters existing in that province, when it fell under the dominion of the English. His name was Cuyler, and his descendants are still numerous and prosperous in that country, to which prosperity my friend's wisdom and goodness contributed not a little. This Cuyler was the person who brought over the four Mohawk kings, who were mentioned by the Spectator as exciting so much wonder in England. He was introduced to Queen Anne, and had several conversations with her. She offered to knight him, but he refused, not choosing an elevation unusual in that country, which would make an invidious distinction betwixt him and his friends. Some years after his return, his daughter Catalina, then about

nephew, who was, and I believe is still, in the service of this country. Several others of them were distinguished in their own country, though unknown here.

eighteen,

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eighteen, was married to Colonel Schuyler, who possessed an estate above Albany, in the direction which led to the vicinity of the French and hostile Indians. He was a person whose calm, temperate wisdom, singular probity, and thorough knowledge of the affairs and interests of the bordering nations, had given him a very great influence, not only in his own province, but among the Indians and Canadian French, whose respective languages he spoke fluently. He was wealthy, and very generous, and so public-spirited, that though he did all in his power to prevent war, being, in fact, a

"Lover of peace, and friend of human kind;"

yet, when he saw it inevitable, he raised a regiment at his own expence, and was the first who gave character or energy to the provincial troops. To detail instances of public virtue in this truly great and good man, would, in fact, be giving the history of the province during his lifetime. From the place where he lived, he stood, as it were,

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were, a barrier between the Indians and the inhabitants. Of high and distinguished utility was this mild, philosophic, and Christian character; yet, unless he had met a congenial mind, he could neither have done so much good, nor prevented so much evil. Luckily for the public, they had no family; therefore, greatly resembling each other, both in taste, and inclination, and intellectual powers, their efforts were all directed one way. At that timet here were not many settlers in the province who were acquainted with the English language; and these generally entertained a rooted prejudice, nay aversion, to the very army which came to protect them. In the hospitality, intelligence, and pleasing conversation of this very worthy pair, these officers always found a refuge; from them they met with a cordial kindness, sound advice, and useful information. Petty and crooked policy was unknown in this patriarchal family, where a succession of adopted children, judiciously educated, and a number of domestic slaves, very kindly and tenderly treated,

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treated, formed a happy community, who were directed with such prudence, that they left leisure to their rulers for beneficence still more widely diffused, and for studies of the most useful nature. Their acquaintance with elegant literature was, perhaps, not very extensive; the Spectator, the tragedy of Cato, and the works of Milton and Young, being the only books I remember to have met with, exclusive of history, biography, and memoirs: of these, indeeed, there was a very ample collection, which had been carefully read, and thoroughly digested, by the owners; and which not only furnished very frequently matter of conversation, but materials for reflection, and for that system of policy by which their plans were regulated. They had three objects in view, besides the great primary one of making their large family as good, and wise, and happy as possible: the first was, to prevent injustice being done to the Indians, to conciliate their affections, and to meliorate their condition; the second, to alleviate the hardships and difficulties to which the British troops were exposed,

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posed, from marching into unknown wilder-nesses, by receiving them into their family, making them acquainted with the nature of the country, and the manner of managing the stubborn tempers of the boorish inhabitants, avoiding ambushes, and reconciling Indian nations to our government. On these occasions, they would accommodate in the house, those officers, whose morals and manners recommended them most, and allow the parties of soldiers, as they passed, a lodging in their offices, and an abundant supply of milk and vegetables. The third object to which their wisdom and humanity were directed was, the protection and comfort of new settlers, on their neighbouring boundary, to whom they were ever ready to extend a helping hand, both in the way of advice and assistance. Indeed, so well did they understand the interests and defence of that growing colony, and the important frontier on which they lived, that every new governor always came up to consult them, and no public measure was thought safe till the Colonel approved of it. In the mean

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time, their house was an academy for morals, for manners, and for solid knowledge. There the best company was always to be met; there the most important topics were discussed, dispassionately and fully; there conversation, properly so called, was cultivated, and tasted. The little embellishments and elegancies of life, perhaps, had no great share in these discussions; but she,

"Whose mind was moral as the preacher's tongue,
And strong, to wield all science worth the name,"

was well skilled in the holy scriptures, and intimately acquainted with the writings of the best divines and historians. I say she, for the Colonel died before I knew her, after they had lived forty years together, in unexampled happiness; and reared (from the time of their being weaned, till they married, or launched out into active life) fifteen nieces, nephews, or other relatives, several of whom have since been distinguished, both for their merit and their uncommon success in various pursuits. Soon after the death of her lamented partner, Madam Schuyler removed to the town of Albany,

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Albany, that she might more freely enjoy her choice of society,—people, whom experience in the world, or superior attainments, made suitable associates for a mind so sound and so enlightened. Her husband had left her all his possessions. The use she made of her wealth was to keep a kind of open table for strangers who were in any respect worthy of admittance; and to educate, in succession, the children of different relations of her beloved consort. Many particulars, relative to this excellent person's life and manners, would be well worth preserving; and, if I outlive her, (for I hope she still does live,) I think I shall, some time or other, endeavour to please myself at least, by preserving a memoir of a life so valuable and exemplary.—But to the point; In the eighth year of my age, we removed from the fort, to make room for some other regiment. Lodging next this good lady in town, I took a great fancy to a beautiful child, a relation whom she was bringing up in the house; and my father attracted Madam Schuyler's notice by his piety, not very frequently

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quently a distinguishing feature in the military character. I will not tire you with the detail of all the little circumstances that gradually acquired me the place in her favour which I ever continued to possess. She saw me reading Paradise Lost with delighted attention; she was astonished to see a child take pleasure in such a book, and no less so to observe, that I loved to sit thoughtful by her, and hear the conversations of elderly and grave people.

My father, on leaving the army, took a small farm of her's; she still grew more attached to me, and I lived with her for two winters. She professed a desire to keep me entirely, if my parents would part with me. I was admitted to the honour of being her constant companion, slept in her room, and was entertained with many interesting details, which to hear did I, like Desdemona, "seriously incline," and she was gratified with my attention. Whatever culture my mind has received I owe to her. Beyond the knowledge of my first duties I should scarce have proceeded, or rather, I should

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have become almost savage, in a retreat which precluded me from the advantages of society, as well as those of education. It is now three years since I have heard of her. When we left her, the discontents against the mother-country were daily on the increase. Her influence, which was very considerable, was all thrown into the opposite scale. I fear her latter days will be darkened by that disaffection to the parent state, which she always dreaded would become the consequence of peace and security.—Now, dear Sir, you have traced all this premature reflection to its true and veritable source; and you will possibly call it parrotism; nay, what is more, and worse, you will possibly not be far mistaken.

Adieu! dear Sir. Thank me for making known to you a mind worthy of your own; whose place you have in some degree supplied to

Your attached and grateful, &c. &c.

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LETTER XXII.

TO MISS REID.

Fort Augustus, June 31, 1773.

I HOPE you are now satisfied with my diligent and unwearied endeavours to amuse you, and make you present here as much as possible. I don't know as to the worth of the people. They certainly take a great deal too much pleasure in turning each other into ridicule; one is greatly amused; but I don't know that we ought to indulge such amusement.

I wish you saw how gay and pleasing summer looks here now; but no one will admire it with me, and delight, as I do, in seeing nature unmasked and unfettered. I feel my mind rise to a kind of melancholy greatness, when I contemplate these scenes, particularly by moonlight; but I think I should rejoice *once more* if I met with one that tasted all this as I do. I am seized with longings for you all that are very pain-

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ful; nobody will care for me here, because nobody will understand me. I cannot blame them. I am too rustic, too simple at least, for people of the world, with whom manner is every thing; and though myself uneducated, I painfully feel I have too much refinement, too much delicacy for uninformed people, with whom I feel no point of union but simplicity. 'Tis pity there are no hermitesses; I should just now like to be one. All the spirit that diverted you in my description of our garrisonians, is evaporated. They are diverting originals, but their restlessness and discontent provoke me. Military people always speak with pleasure of the place where they have been, or where they are going, but never are satisfied where they are. One sees them too near here. They are generally well-bred, and entertaining, but often hard, and heartless at bottom; and always arbitrary in their families, when they have them. They rail constantly at this place, yet, perhaps, they will never be so happy when they leave it. I would rather be a beetle under a stone, than a dragon

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dragon fly, blown with every blast.—Good night; I am peevish, but not at you, spirit of truth and gentleness!

"Meek nature's child, again adieu!"

LETTER XXIII.

TO MISS OURRY (NOW MRS. F——R.)

Fort Augustus, May 24, 1774.

You see I have lost no time in complying with your most agreeable proposal. Yes, my beloved sister, let us, solitary beings as we are, in our respective families, supply that endearing relation to each other. You have only anticipated me, for the thought was my own. Of course you had a right to it. Kindred and united minds like ours should surely maintain a closer intercourse than we have hitherto had it in our power to do. Our separation has made us experience the mournful solitude of the heart, "the craving void left aching in the breast," occasioned by the want of that luxury of affection, ima-

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gination, and intelligence, which we have so long shared together. The beautiful caves at Inchnacardach, the wild hanging gardens of Glendoe, and the echoing glen by the waterfall at Culachy, restore your image to my solitary musings, only to make me feel your loss the more. Never will any one enjoy these scenes with me as you have done. Never was the true, the genuine love of nature, so strong, in a person bred in the very midst of that society that was, most of all, estranged from it. Can you ever forget the sweet summer evening, behind the great white rose bush, when we first found each other out? Sacred for ever be the hour to virtue and to friendship! The smile of nature brightening every object round that enchanting garden; the full sonorous murmur of the Oich over its fantastic gravelly shores; and the thrush's vesper hymn from Thicket Island, so near, so inaccessible, and so attractive, all opened and soothed our minds, and half an hour did as much, as half an age would have done in any other place; opened our hearts, and made

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made us know we were worthy to mingle them. Sure, if we have guardian angels, they must have smiled together on an union productive of such innocent felicity; may I not add, useful improvement? How sadly I look at eight on the glacis, where we used to spend the full hour from that to nine, in convoying and reconvoying each other. These tender recollections are indeed "pleasant yet mournful to the soul." I cannot complain much of solitude in the strict sense of the word; we are now become acquainted with our neighbours all around, and see them often. You know what a wide word neighbourhood is in this thin peopled country. Beside, we are all now tamed and softened, and live on such a good footing with each other, that we are *like young lambkins sporting in a green meadow*, as your antiquated friend expressed it. I, never being used to see much company, particularly fine company, have nothing to complain of on that score; but, O! my Nancy, ask your own heart what pleasure mine finds in the society of common acquaintances, selfish, superficial,

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ficial, and possibly deceitful. Christina Macpherson stands a worthy exception to this general character, which you will easily perceive to be the drawing of chagrin. Yet her sound understanding and steady attachment, though valuable in themselves, cannot supply the place of the numberless, nameless, links by which our minds were connected; those conversations where perfect freedom, without the least tincture of rude familiarity, unveiled the inmost thoughts of our hearts, which must be depraved and degenerated, before our mutual affection can be abated, far less extinguished. I know not where I am wandering, but I meant to tell you, that there are a thousand things which occur in the course of my reading and observation, to delight and interest me, of which she has no idea; for this, she is not to blame, but I am to be pitied. Were it not for the correspondence I keep up with you and my dear Harriet, I should find this exile gloomy indeed. Yet, though I feel unwilling to submit to its wholesome bitterness, my reason informs me that even this

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this exile has its advantages, considered in one point of view. Your penetration enabled you to discover in my mind a strange mixture of wild enthusiasm of imagination, with indolent tranquillity of temper. The retired manner in which I have been brought up, equally remote from the refined artifice of higher life, and the necessary activity and confined notions of the mob, have nourished my peculiarities. So has the little company I have kept; these were mostly of the same primitive cast, and lay under the same disadvantages of being equally unfit for vulgar and what the world calls elegant society. The mournful event* to which you are no stranger, blasting the flattering picture of felicity which my heart had too fondly indulged, fixed in my mind a cast of pensive thought, which has been alternately sustained by the tenderness of friendship, and the reveries of solitude; so that I am now neither fit for any other situation, nor desirous of a change, lest it should prove

"A bitter change—severer for severe."

* The death of a young friend!

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If heaven should favour our ardent wishes of once more meeting, I hope the change will not be a disadvantageous one. I should value your society more than ever, now I know what it is to be deprived of that or any other suitable to my taste. Whatever change a necessary habit of prudence and reserve may have made on my manners, you will find my heart the same, and we shall meet as if we parted yesterday: my soul foretells that this meeting, and all we have seen since we parted, will only make us value each other the more.

I wish we were once more together, with the privilege of teasing poor *Fungy*, by affecting learning, and mis-pronouncing hard words. What a dilemma his desire of appearing gallant and well-bred, combining with his real hatred for the sex, used to reduce him to! He might have furnished a new character for a comedy. Shall we never more hold him in chace, through the windings of the zig-zag road, where he used

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to part before us like another Falstaff, little knowing that we only wished to frighten him. I have often smiled by myself at the recollection of our industry in tormenting him, and never hear a hard word murdered, but what *a crowned cat in a nation of ideas** brings him into my head. I was so much entertained by your lively and humorous description of your place of residence and its inhabitants, that I could not resist reading a part of it to my father, who was quite charmed with it, and, having taken his tour of duty through many parts of Ireland, is the better qualified to judge of the verisimilitude of your description. Vanity has her votaries every where; but on the Hibernian shore, she is more devoutly worshipped than any saint of the country. She holds the place there which pride does here: I don't know how to strike the balance. Vanity is in better humour, but pride tells fewer lies. The first is more pleasing, the

* Concatenation of ideas: a word invented to tease Captain D'Arippe, of the 15th, who of all things dreaded female pedants.

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latter safer. May the dominion of either be far from our peaceful bosoms. I conclude this letter of declamation, by telling you it shall be directly followed by one of faithful narration, giving you a brief history of this little epitome of the great world you are ranging through. Short may your eccentric course prove. If I were a star, I should like to be a fixed one. Be you in the mean time my guiding planet, and shed sweet influence on your unaltered friend.

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LETTER XXIV.

TO MISS OURRY.

Fort Augustus, March 10, 1775.

MY DEAREST,

YOURS came just in time to relieve my anxiety, and prevent me from absolutely despairing of ever hearing more from you. Need I tell you my uneasiness, or how I rejoiced on receiving another proof of your continued love? My pleasure changed too soon to melancholy, when I understood the dreadful dilemma you are all in about this American voyage, which impends too surely over you: I had indeed heard that the 15th were under orders for America, but did not dream of Captain Ourry's accompanying them; and I examined every newspaper in hopes of finding his name changed, or sold out. How grieved and surprized was I to hear that he is in danger of being once more torn from the embraces of a family

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so dear to him, who have already spent so many tedious years in lamenting his absence, and this to plunge into the most cruel and horrid of wars; whose most desirable event can be only that of successfully devastating with bloodshed and destruction a country, late the most peaceful and happy on earth, but never, never to be happy more, end this as it may. The cup was too full to hold, yet I did not think it would be spilt thus rudely. How dear must victory be bought with the lives of our fellow subjects and former friends! But I will no longer torment myself or you, with giving vent to all the sad reflections arising from this most painful subject. Yet why were you not more distinct and particular? Alas! I fear all our prayers and hopes for the desired reconciliation, will prove fruitless. The divine justice seems about to display itself in taking signal vengeance on the iniquities of the times. The corruption of the parent state, which leads her to an inordinate enjoyment of those advantages, that she possesses in pre-eminence of all others, and her

ungrateful

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ungrateful neglect of the source of all those blessings, seems arrived at its height; and will be requited by the ingratitude of those colonies which owe their existence to her. There was a time when such a half-moral, half-political harangue from your friend would have made you laugh; but now fatal necessity urges us to take more than a common share in the public calamity—calamity how heavy, and how general, when we, who, in the sequestered vale of life, might be supposed exempted from any other share than the tribute which humanity pays to the woes of human kind, are forced for those dearest to us to have our hearts wrung with anguish hitherto unknown! I deeply sympathize with your sufferings, on account of the worthy Captain's illness, and that of your good mother. Alas! my dear girl, we were sisters by sentiment and inclination before, but now I may hail you as a sister sufferer. You have met, or are likely to meet, with the train of sorrows that have obscured the morning of my youth. These I ac-

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I account salutary drops of bitterness thrown into my cup, lest the tranquil easiness of my temper, and that range of imagination which furnishes me with a boundless store of ideal pleasures, should raise my enjoyment of life beyond what is destined for this imperfect state. You will too feelingly trace the resemblance which I allude to; the daily sufferings and broken spirits of a beloved parent, bursting asunder the tenderest ties of affection, and hurrying me away, far, very far, from those whose presence was life and joy to me! I hope you will not finish the resemblance, by being forced to cross the Atlantic with the same desponding reluctance which hung upon the spirits of your friend on a similar occasion. Never shall I forget the emotion with which I saw the Cape of Neversink melt into air; when I bade the last farewel to the dear loved coast of America, which I am now certain I shall never more behold. My dear friends were beginning to be persecuted for their loyalty, before we came away, for

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even then the storm began to lower.—Poor lost Letch*! his kingdom is not of this world, that is evident. What a crush to the spirit of a young soldier, to be forced to forsake a profession he was so attached to, at the very time that military merit had the fairest chance for distinction and reward! I wish you had given more particulars of his parting behaviour. I am glad he spoke so plainly, because it no doubt relieved his mind, and the assurance of your compassion and esteem, which was all he could reasonably hope, would be so consoling to him. You will think my expectations romantic, as usual, but still I will hope our friend Henry has embraced the only profession he is fitted for. The zealous fervour of his attachments,

* Henry Letch was the son of a physician, of the same name, in Mark Lane. He was sent very early into the army, full of romantic prejudices, which led him into boundless profusion and endless errors. With great purity of heart, and uprightness of intention, he very early dissipated his patrimony, and soon after was so much in debt as to be obliged to sell his commission, about the period when this letter was written.

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his glowing admiration of superior excellence, and the ardour of his conceptions, will find adequate objects, where the affections of his heart, and services of his future life, will, I trust, be dedicated. How happy those whom the storms of life drive so early to their best, their final harbour! That abhorrence of vice which would be a continual source of vexation, in struggling through the scenes of active life, will be very well suited to the duties of a pastor; besides, the emphatic eloquence which makes every word of our poor friend so interesting, will be peculiarly suited to the pulpit.—How many new things have I to tell you of? A new cousin, whom I am much pleased with. He has learning, taste, and understanding. I find him in many respects very congenial with my disposition. Then we have got a new church, built by subscription, mind, that it would do your heart good to see, and your soul good to hear sermon in:—poor Mrs. Brown!—how much sympathy she claims. My old play-fellow George is now doing penance at Boston. We have been quite

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quite animated all summer, with flocks of wild geese from your country. Lament with me, for we have had another ship load of emigrants, marching off to their Chaldea, for such I know it will appear to them. I have a good mind to pray for a heart of stone. Your old friend, the Honourable Captain Murray*, commands the invalids here, and passed the summer amongst us. He is more helpless than you saw him, but has still equal spirits, and amiable manners. We often conversed about you, and he begs you may not forget him. Mr. G. left us last week to be settled in Badenock. Our parting was—almost affecting ---------- he was proud of your notice and remembrance, and begs me to assure you of his cordial good wishes.

* * * * * * *

Pray write immediately on receipt of this. Stay at home one night from your Hibernian Ranelagh, and renounce noise and

* William Murray, brother to the Earl of Dunmore; who had formerly resided near Captain Ourry, and was intimately known to that family.

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head-ach to gratify your friend. Pray explain yourself about being sick of elegance. I don't remember teasing you about the word; but my out of the world education, and primitive notions, and almost savage simplicity of taste, made yours seem to me to border on false refinement. I triumph in your confession, having always assured myself that your native sensibility and ripened judgment would lead you back to the paths of nature and of truth. Then you will fully relish that chaste and sublime simplicity in style, in manners, and in sentiment, which delights the untutored mind. Your change of taste will shew you many things, which you once thought eccentric, in a very different light. Tell the Captain and his lady I rejoice in their kind remembrance of me, and shall never forget them. Friend Henry too shall be remembered with all his imperfections on his head. Adieu! I shall always be very tenderly your sister and friend.

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LETTER XXV.

TO MISS OURRY.

Fort Augustus, May 26, 1775.

To rejoin—I can the better comprehend your *pair of ducks*, as we have now in the garrison a couple (not a pair) who are newly arrived from Ireland, and always talk with fond regret of Dublin, as the centre of all their joys. They have so much external and superficial elegance, and so little of that refinement of sentiment and manners which emanates from the heart, that I never see them without thinking of your new acquired friends. They are natives of this country, and have a singular history.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * *

They are fond of company without real hospitality, or the least regard for their guests, whom they look upon as merely implements to kill time with. They behave to each other with a kind of civility which seems

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seems rather a substitute for tenderness, than a proof of it. There is a negative merit which must be allowed to those well-bred people, who never offend or oblige you, but are satisfied with amusing and being amused. They are, perhaps, safer than people of mere virtue, who have quicker feelings and more earnestness. They have neither acrimony enough to feel quick disgust at vice and folly, nor benevolence to be delighted with the excellencies of God's creatures. They neither love nor hate cordially, but just consider people as cards to play with. Now I can't endure to be a card, since I can't aspire at being queen of hearts. Yet if you knew how eagerly I set about gardening, and how stoutly I laboured at transplanting, you would be apt to call me queen of spades. I have dwelt thus minutely on these characters, as I think them a sample or counterparts of those you daily meet with. I am sorry the general rage for dissipation, and your indignant feelings at it, should lead you to think your mind contracted;—

"I do

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"I do not think my sister so to seek
And so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And that calm peace which goodness bosoms ever,"

as to suffer the depravity which prevails around her to produce any lasting sentiment, but pity, which must indeed on some occasions be mingled with contempt. Whatever you say in a momentary heat, I am sure your good sense and kindly affections will preserve you from a gloomy disgust at human nature, on account of the vice and absurdity of individuals, to whose nature it belongs to rush into full display, while the pious, the modest, and the good, serve God and their fellow-creatures in quiet obscurity.

When we forsake the paths of nature and simplicity, in a restless pursuit of amusement, vanity and ostentation generally take the lead of all the passions. That principle which leads the human mind so eagerly to desire the approbation of its fellow-mortals, was certainly placed within us as a spur, not only to the desire, but to the attainment of applause; and if people applauded only wha

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what was right, it might answer noble purposes. But, alas! when conscious we no longer deserve esteem, we grasp at admiration, and endeavour to conceal our wants of real happiness and self-enjoyment, under the veil of external gaiety and artificial mirth. The glossy varnish of politeness, which, like the skin of a snake, though bright and pleasing to the view, is cold and slippery to the touch, we are taught to substitute for the lively glow and artless tenderness of true benevolence. Be merciful even to the perversion of Irish hospitality. Excess of good nature first makes them wretched, and then necessity makes them cunning. To be truly and austerely good among such a "perverse and crooked generation," requires the resolution of a confessor at least. But you must at all events preserve your charity, were it but to guard the purity of your own heart.

Occasional solitude is a blessing which every well regulated mind would long for, if deprived of that privilege. Remember what our favourite Young says of

"Our

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"Our reason, guardian angel and our God."

I have a particular pleasure in reading the pencil-marked lines that we compared together. I wish we could read some more chosen books in that way, whenever we meet, as meet we shall, I trust:—we may then have the satisfaction of tracing the similarity of our respective tastes. You desire a history of the garrison, but so bad a newsmonger and narrator am I, that unless I go through it *à la militaire*, somewhat in the order of the muster-roll, I shall lose myself. The *prime personage* then remains much as you left him; if any thing, he mends; stays more at home, and is content to pry less. But whether this be reformation or decline, this deponent saith not. G.'s good nature and salt-water wit continue to grow and prosper. He will never want a butt while we have a ruler. I have a notion I, too, furnish one occasionally; but it is wit without valour, for his is always an absent butt. I have one way of keeping these gentry in order; I can see they dread my contempt. Now, next to being loved, the

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best thing is to be feared; and when people know you incapable of meanness and deceit, depend upon it, they will fear you. Mrs. N. is still the alternate prey of doubts and despondency: you would pity her if you knew half what she suffers. Yet who can imagine it better than you, by what you saw your own mother suffer in the like situation. To be sure Mrs. N.'s feelings are on no occasion very lively; yet, though we children of fancy suffer more than others, both have many consolations. Besides the sympathy of friendship, and the ardour of hope, we build the prettiest castles imaginable, tenant them with courteous knights and virtuous dames, and then sit, rent-free, in these airy dwellings. Mrs. N. seldom hears of her husband; he is prisoner somewhere on the frontier of Pennsylvania. ------ Now I hope I have made the whole garrison known to you. Our new Surgeon is an original, whom I would wish you to know, but I have not colours wherewith to paint him. He was very stiff and pedantic, but that begins to wear off. He is,

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is, I dare say, well principled; but, though he has solid learning, I believe, and very sound sense I am sure,—he has neither fancy nor feeling, and has the presumption to laugh at sentiment; you may believe I grow very angry, and attempt to be severe, and then he rallies me about morbid sensibility, as he calls it. He is very provoking, and quite incorrigible. I always tell him he will meet an Iphigenia somewhere*. Remember me respectfully to your father and mother, and kindly to every one you think has any kindness for me. Adieu, dearest Nancy! only sister—beloved friend. Farewel.

Tom cat is well, and lives in clover,
But Perry's harmless life is over:
To tell you that he died quite mad,
Will melt your heart, and make you sad:
But when you know he sleeps in peace,
Methinks your grief, like mine, should cease.

* He is now happily married, and settled in Edinburgh; is a particular friend of the Author's, and a valuable member of society.

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LETTER XXVI.

TO MISS OURRY.

Fort Augustus, Feb. 15, 1776.
(The month of our nativity.)

My dearest girl! I most sincerely forgive your perplexing and mortifying silence, and most willingly attribute the chasm in our correspondence to any other motive than indifference, altogether inconsistent as it is with the sincerity and affection which form so great and distinguishing a part of your character. But now, that my forgiveness may be as sincere as I know your penitence to be, let me, with my accustomed freedom, warn you of the consequences of indulging that unfriendly indolence, less pardonable in your active, lively disposition, than in my easy and indolent one. I have admired this vivacity without envy, and am therefore entitled to reap the fruits of it. I was vain of your attainments, and always thought

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myself deficient of nothing which you possessed; it was enough for me that we had them between us. This is digression—but I resume. In the present unsettled habits of your life, there is nothing you ought to be so careful of, as cherishing those friendships which have given you so much pleasure, and done you so much good in your earlier years; for indeed, as poor Pope said when he was dying, and saw things as they are, "There is nothing worth living for but virtue and friendship;" and friendship is a part of virtue. When the one withers, the other will droop. Friendship is the misletoe growing on the oak of virtue. I fancy when the Druids cut the misletoe with golden sickles, they had a kind of prescience of the dear and close ties that gold was destined in after ages to divide. Seriously, if the friendships that have formed the delight and comfort of the earlier stage of life were once extinguished in your breast, no later formed attachment would ever supply their loss. You will meet with many agreeable acquaintances in your *peregrinations*; nay, in the country

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where you are, you run a chance of being overwhelmed with civility by the one sex, and compliment by the other; but where will you find the playful innocence of ——, the solid sense and rational attachment of ——, or the sincere and constant affection of her whom you have thus long neglected? Yes, my dear sister, in the best sense of the word, sister of my heart, and of my vowed affection, if you allow trivial motives to estrange you from your friends, as their remembrance cannot die in your heart, it will only live to torment you. I could not endure to think of my friends when I could no longer think of them with pleasure. Any thing may be endured but remorse; 'tis the dreaded future punishment begun on earth. Sweetly mournful is the recollection of those, with whom and for whom we have lived in tender confidence and unity. Should they depart for ever, when we can look back blameless, in the midst of our sorrow, we are pleased with the consciousness that the sacred approbation of virtue consecrates the tender regret. Transient intimacies will never

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never fill the gloomy vacuity which extinguished affections leave in the heart. Vainly, if that were the case, would you endeavour to fill the chasm in your mind with amusements ending in satiety and disgust. Now, in my turn, let me ask pardon for these transgressions on your patience; be assured they are owing to the anxiety of a heart which, though fully convinced of your present regard, dreads few things so much as your future indifference. You would have gratified me by saying more about your new acquaintances and present employments. What have you been doing? Your worked gown unfinished, all your friends neglected, and all this in a place so remote, and, by your own description, unsocial! What will become of you in the hurry and dissipation of Dublin, if you contrive to be thus mysteriously engrossed on the banks of the notorious Shannon, which one might suppose to be the chosen retreat of dulness? Yet, when I think of it, it is not lead, but brass, that people are said to acquire by plunging into it. Alas! for our poor unhappy

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brother*! How afflicting is your history, and yet how well we might foresee what has happened.

"Curse on his virtues, they've undone himself."

But what is virtue, or can it indeed exist, without self-command, and self-denial? What avails to poor Henry, that he had no vicious propensities, when he has contrived his own ruin, and, what is much worse, rendered himself contemptible, by indulging inclinations tending to elegance and virtue, beyond all due bounds? This it is to be a mother's darling, and to be Dr. Dodd's pupil, and to skim the smooth surface of knowledge, and as Voltaire said of Rousseau, "To talk of virtue and philosophy, till nobody shall know what virtue and philosophy is."

* Henry Letch, who delighted to style himself our brother, was at an early age, with eleven other youths, the children of wealthy parents, placed under the care of the too well known Dr. Dodd; and, in common with the rest, received very flimsy and superficial notions of morality and religion, and an extravagant taste for elegance and false refinements. He was fond of walking with us, reading to us,

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Dearest Nancy, let this sad example teach us, to go higher than essays and novels, for our divinity and morality. These must be gathered with labour, and are worth the labour of gathering.—Now spirit of Lycurgus, and soul of Leonidas, and shade of king Agis,—and all other laconic powers! assist me, to cram, and crowd, and crush together in a few pithy sentences, the narration of domestic transactions. Know, then, that after the dissolution and scatteration of last year's happy trio, another sprung up in its room, of which triangle I am the base, as you right worthily were of the former. Christina made one of the sides, and you easily guess the other. Well, for a time we rejoiced together with perfect harmony, being in

us, &c. And we hoped, betwixt reasoning and ridicule, to wean him from his absurdities—but to little purpose. Adversity, however, seemed to produce the desired effect. He took orders, and obtained some chaplaincy about Dublin Castle, and seemed to apply seriously to the duties of his function; but was, about the year 1778, cut off by the gaol fever, which he had caught by a voluntary attendance on sick prisoners.

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in such an easy, sauntering, playful humdrum way, that we all insensibly became more and more necessary to each other, because in fact we saw no great motive to care for any one else. However, this was too good to last. I found the thermometer rising too high in a certain point. I thought it was being too like the world to see what was right in my friends' cases only, and not practise it in my own, and so finally, I did what formerly I advised you to do; and now, being very proud, we think it incumbent to be very sulky. But every nursery maid knows that the best cure for sulkiness is just—to let it alone. Adieu! my dear friend; tell those that remember me, that I never forget any one I ever cared for. I have a thousand good wishes to send you, which this paper cannot hold. Remember me, and set it in your tablets, or——my ghost will haunt you.

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LETTER XXVII.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, June 5th, 1778.

Now, as you have my letter from Inverness, containing much weighty matter, it only remains to tell you, that I met my father, in the Governor's carriage, at the Fall of Fyers, vulgarly called the halfway house; and of joy there was abundance, which consoled me for parting in the morning with those dear creatures, Mr. and Mrs. Tod, and various other privations, one of which, though a fanciful, was to me a heavy one; for the delight I should have had in riding through the woods on the Loch side was so embittered by thoughts of how you would have enjoyed it; and then I was so teased with the affected rural taste of one of the Inverness beaux, who accompanied me, that I was tempted, like Phœbe's lover, in the song—To

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" Cry Sirrah! and give him a blow with my crook,"

as he did to his dog Tray, for fawning when his lovership was out of humour.—Well, my father and I proceeded by ourselves, and, after much " fair discourse," arrived by tea time, where I found Mrs. Newmarch and the Miss Campbells Duntroon waiting for me. I leave you to judge my feelings at meeting my dear mother, and finding myself safely and happily arrived among a circle of kind friends.

We have had a visit from the new married couple, who are doubtless oddly matched. " Speak ye who best can tell," whether sons of light or not, and inform us how this woman came to take that man, who is a good creature too; but her refinement, and her prospects, and her brother! She is the person whom Johnson mentions in his Tour, whom he met at Rasay, and again at her brother's house in the Isle of Sky. She looks much up to that surly sage, and receives letters and presents of books from him.

The eldest of the fair Argathelians is really astonishing for womanly appearance; and I am

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am told her genius, &c. I heard much of her at Perth. By all I hear and see, I have taken it in my head that she is a kind of female Quixote, but a very improvable subject; and when she begins to know the importance of common duties, and the value of native elegance, and modest merit unaccompanied by talent; when she discovers that there is something in the world worth loving, besides virtue mounted on stilts, and genius soaring among the clouds; so benevolent a mind, brought down from these false elevations, may be the delight of her friends, and an ornament to society.

Here follows a list of worthies, to whom in my name you must say something tender, grateful, kind, and emphatic, according to the various characters you address, beginning always with Miss Pagan. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * By discharging these debts of love, you will make me easy. Then shall the soul of your friend rest in this *Limbus Patrum*, purifying, and refining to fit it for the society of those blessed, who inhabit Clydeside, Cartside, and

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and Kelvinside, and say their prayers in the dear land of my nativity. Adieu, collectively, ye worthies of Clydesdale! Farewel, individually, friend of my forlorn heart.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, June 8th, 1778.

* * * * * * *

* * * The joy of Christie's meeting and mine passes description. Yet she is somehow melancholy, and for this there is some cause. She has too strong and steady a mind, and is too constantly occupied to sink causeless. Her sister-in-law is, when in health, a well-bred good-humoured woman; but so nervous, and those complaints recur so often, and are so fatal to the peace, and to the temper, of those afflicted with them, who are generally uneven and capricious; in her case this only shows itself in sudden attachments, and a great

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fondness for new favourites, and prejudices against others at first sight. I am at present a great favourite, but no ways desirous of cultivating that favour. I am not in a humour for studying tempers; the days are fast receding that saw me prone to admire, and to deck every one, merely tolerable, with a thousand fancied charms. Besides, I grow very deaf to the lamentations of those, who meet no person or thing that is right or upright. The new light that has flashed in on my mind, shows me that the evil lies often in the sweet sufferer's own downy bosom. Now I must not dismiss this "Sunbeam of the Isle of Mist," without telling you that she is formed like a nymph, moves like a grace, sings like a syren, and plays like a muse; in short, if she wore a mask, we should expect an angel; but, alas! where the loves and smiles were wont to live so amicably together, and play at hide and seek in dimples, their arch foe, the small-pox, has exalted his repulsive trophies; and sure never was victory so complete. Now here is enough of Culachy gossiping. But there are

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are two new stars risen in our horizon, of whom I must say something. The eldest Miss C——, then, is a wonderful girl of her age, scarce sixteen, has a fine understanding, seems good hearted, and has a turn for reflection, which, properly directed, might be a source of improvement and advantage to her. But her mind seems to have been in a hot-bed; every thing is premature beyond the simplicity natural to that age. I cannot develope her; one minute I think I know her, and the next she is out of sight: I am sure she does not wish to deceive me, but so young a philosopher may possibly deceive herself. In the mean time she is much inclined to muse and warble, and would have me tune a responsive lyre; but her muse and mine are of a different family; her's is in waiting from dawn to twilight, and moreover "visits her nightly," while my inspirations come "Like angel visits, few and far between," and have for some time ceased entirely. Two or three times short answers have been forced out of me, all deprecating further solicitation. I send

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send you two very comely efforts of hers. One stanza of my last shall serve as a sample:

> The leisure hour alone the Muse requires,
> The still retreat to peace and virtue dear;
> From vulgar eyes conceals her sacred fires,
> But calls on heaven, and heaven-taught souls to hear.

But this hint is unavailing; and so are all my attempts at reformation; nothing indeed but woful experience can reclaim wilful wit, though its ways are not ways of pleasantness, nor yet its paths peace. But it is a sad thing to want a mother, and be tost about among artificial characters, of whom I have seen so many, even in this retreat, that I sicken more and more for you and the other children of simplicity, in whom "all my delights are placed." Adieu, my daisy, my violet, my all that is native and genuine! Fondly adieu!

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LETTER XXIX.

TO MISS JANE EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, July 1st, 1778.

MY DEAR JANE,

Now that I am settled, and have leisure to be angry, I am out of all patience at not hearing from any of you this age. I had letters by Perth only once since I arrived. As for my trunk, it has been so well treated by your cousin, that it still remains peaceably, though the carrier be arrived. What to do or say, I know not, and far less what to put on * * * * * *

I lost a good conveyance for a letter, and that a letter to Lady Isabella, by going on a grand party of pleasure on the Loch. There was the Governor and his new espoused love, who, by the bye, is very well, considering, frank and cheerful, and so forth; and there were the two Miss Campbells Duntroon, blithe bonny lasses; and

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and there was the noble Admiral of the lake, and his fair sister; and the Doctor, and another beau, whom you have not the honour to know. We went on board our galley, which is a fine little vessel, with a commodious and elegant cabin.

The day was charming, the scene around was in itself sublime and cheerful, enlivened by sunshine and the music of the birds, that answered each other loudly from the woody mountains on each side of the Loch. On leaving the fort, we fired our swivels, and displayed our colours. On our arrival opposite Glenmoriston, we repeated this ceremony, and sent out our boat for as many of the family as chose to come on board. The Laird himself, his beautiful daughter, and her admirer, obeyed the summons: they dined with us, and then we proceeded to the celebrated Fall of Fyers.

I had seen this wonder before, but never to such advantage. Strangers generally come from the high road, and look down upon it; but the true sublime and beautiful is to be attained by going from the lake by Fyers

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Fyers House, as we did, to look up to it. We landed at the river's mouth, and had to walk up near a mile, through picturesque openings, in a grove of weeping birch, so fresh with the spray of the fall, that its odours exhale constantly. We arrived at one of the most singular and romantic scenes the imagination can conceive. At the foot of the rock over which the river falls is a small circular bottom, in which rises, as it were, a little verdant hillock of a triangular form, which one might imagine an altar erected to the impetuous Naiad of this overwhelming stream; this rustic shrine, and the verdant sanctuary in which it stands, are adorned by the hand of nature with a rich profusion of beautiful flowers and luxuriant herbage. No wonder, overhung as it is with gloomy woods and abrupt precipices, no rude blast visits this sacred solitude; while perpetual mists, from the cataract that thunders above it, keep it for ever fresh with dewy moisture; and the "showery prism" bends its splendid arch continually over the humid flowers that adorn its entrance.

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trance. Now do not think me romancing, and I shall account to you in some measure for the formation and fertility of this charming little *Delta*. Know, then, that the nymph of the Fyers, abundantly clamorous in summer, becomes in winter a most tremendous fury, sweeping every thing before her with inconceivable violence. The little eminence which rises so oddly in "nature's softest freshest lap," was most probably at first a portion of rock forced down by the violence of the wintry torrent, and as the river covers this spot in floods, successive winters might bring down rich soil, which, arrested by the fragment above said, in process of time formed the altar I speak of. Along with this rich sediment left by the subsiding waters, are conveyed the seeds and roots of plants from all the varieties of soil which the torrent has ravaged: hence "flowers of all hues, and without thorn the rose;" at least I could expect flowers worthy of Paradise in this luxuriant recess. While you stand in this inchanted vale, there is nothing but verdure, music, and tranquillity around

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around you; but if you look to either side, abrupt rocks and unsupported trees growing from their clefts, threaten to overwhelm you. Looking back, you see the river foaming through a narrow opening, and thundering and raging over broken crags almost above your head; looking downwards, you see the same river, after having been collected in a deep basin at your feet, rolling rapidly over steep rocks, like steps of stairs, till at last it winds quietly through the sweet peaceful scene at Fyers House, and loses itself in Loch Ness. Now to what purpose have I taken up my own time and yours with this tedious description, which, after all, gives you no just idea of the place?

When we returned on board, our spirits, being by this time exhausted with walking and wonder, and talking and thunder, and so forth, began to flag. One lady, always delicate and nervous, was seized with a fit, a hysterical one, that frighted us all. I cut her laces, suppressed her struggles, and supported her in my arms during the paroxysm, which lasted near two hours. What you

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you must allow to be very generous in the company, not one of them seemed to envy my place, or made the smallest effort to supplant me in it. We drank tea most sociably, however; landed our Glenmoriston friends, and tried to proceed homeward, but adverse fate had determined we should sup there too, and so arrested us with a dead calm four miles from home. Now midnight approached, and with it gloomy discontent and drowsy insipidity. Our chief took a fit of the fidgets, and begun to cry Poh, Poh; his lady took a fit of yawning; his little grandson took a fit of crying, which made his daughter take a fit of anger; the Doctor took a fit of snoring; even the good natured Admiral took a fit of fretting, because the sailors had taken a fit of drinking. All of a sudden the Miss C.'s took a fit of singing, to the great annoyance of the unharmonious groupe; when I went to the deck, fell into a fit of meditation, and began to say, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank." Indeed nothing could be more inspiring; now silvery calmness slumbered on the deep,

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deep, the moonbeams quivered on the surface of the water and shed a mild radiance on the trees; the sky was unclouded, and the sound of the distant waterfall alone disturbed the universal stillness. But the general ill humour disturbed my rising rapture, for it was now two o'clock, and nobody cared for poetry or moonlight but myself. Well, we saw the wind would not rise, and so we put out the boat, some growling, others vapid, and the rest half asleep. The gentlemen, however, rowed us home, and left the galley to the drunken sailors. You may judge how gaily we arrived.

I fancy Solomon had just returned from a long party of pleasure on the sea of Tiberias, where one of his Mistresses had the hysterics, when he drew the pensive conclusion, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Adieu!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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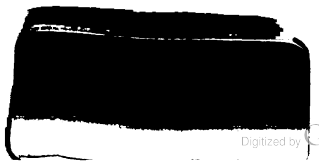
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